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DECEMBER, 1955

THE Liguorian

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF GOOD READING

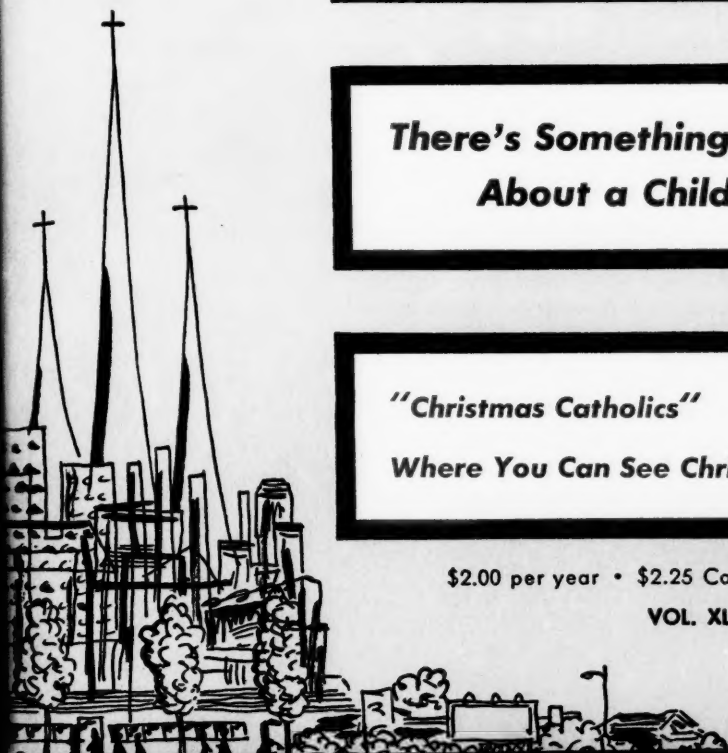
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December, 1955

THE Liguorian

a magazine for the lovers of good reading



Devoted to the Unchangeable Principles of Truth, Justice, Democracy and Religion, and to All That Brings Happiness to Human Beings

What You Need for a Merry Christmas

Here are the essential things, the indispensable things. Don't let them be forgotten or neglected.

Donald F. Miller

IT IS easy to make a mistake in regard to what is necessary for a "merry" Christmas, the kind of Christmas that almost everybody in the world wishes to everybody else on December 25. In the minds of many the ingredients of a merry Christmas are plenty of friends, stacks of nice presents, joyous social and family gatherings, good food, Christmas trees, fancy decorations, and the good old traditional, sentiment-laden Christmas songs and music. Out of these elements many people will try to make a merry Christmas this year, as they do every year, and will wonder why it does not turn out quite as happily as they expected it to.

Even Christians, whose religious beliefs should certainly include the conviction that there is something far more necessary for a merry Christmas than all the above-named things, are yet in danger of being sidetracked from the essentials to the accidentals, from the central fact of Christmas to the social customs and often meaningless traditions that have grown up to smother the central fact. The world pulls us all along in its own direction.

Shopping, package-wrapping, Christmas card mailing, clothes-buying and house-decorating can take up so much time that there is nothing left for the essentials of Christmas.

It is for that reason that this article presents a review of the simple and elementary requirements for a truly merry Christmas. The very essence of the real Christmas joy is to be found in the proper attitude toward Christ, whose birthday it is. The proper attitude toward Christ results from the use of all one's human faculties in response to His authority and His love. Here then, under five headings, is what you most need for a merry Christmas. It is only in consequence of possessing these things that you will find true joy in the accidental activities of Christmas mentioned above.

1. You need to know Christ.

This is the beginning, the only beginning, of Christmas joy, and of every other joy that will ever be experienced by human beings; to know Christ, not in a vague, confused and doubtful way; not merely as a symbol or sentimental ideal of love at Christmas, but

to know Him for what He actually is, to know Him as an historical person Who came into the world to say something to you and to do something for you.

Knowing Christ may be here distinguished from believing in Christ. Knowledge is preliminary to belief. You cannot believe in a person's words until you know the person and why he should be believed. You cannot believe in the tremendous mysteries revealed by Christ until you have reasons for knowing that He must be believed.

How did Christ prove to you that He must be believed? By proving to you that He was God, the very God Who made you out of nothing, and all the world in which you live. And how did He prove that He was God? In the only way that a God could prove to the reason of a man that He had appeared and was speaking to him, that is, by miracles of divine power. Raising the dead is God's prerogative alone; it is within God's power alone. Christ raised the dead often, to give you full evidence of who He was, to give you certain knowledge that He was God. All His other miracles added emphasis and confirmation to the same truth. Moreover, the beauty of the doctrine that He preached, and the effect that it has had on the world, offer supplementary evidence to your reason that He could be no other than God.

You know Christ, then, sufficiently for a merry Christmas, only if you know Him with undoubting certainty, with undimmed clarity, as the Son of God made man. This knowledge you bring to a special point of sharpness in preparation for Christmas, by reading the Gospels that provide the historical evidence for the identity of Jesus, and the commentaries written by experts in the language and the

customs of His times. At least read the four Gospels once during the season of Advent.

2. You need to believe in Christ.

Belief is different from knowledge in this that, while knowledge arises from evidence for a fact or a truth, belief means accepting somebody's word for a fact or a truth without having evidence of one's own for it. Believing in Christ means accepting every word He ever uttered, every proposition He ever stated, as incontrovertible truth, because He represents the highest authority in the world, the very source of all truth, the One who cannot deceive or be deceived. Such belief, springing as it does from a strong act of the will, requires a special grace of God, which is granted to all who humbly seek it.

You will see Christ in the form of a little baby on Christmas, lying helpless in a manger, surrounded by animals of the field, cared for by his poor foster-father and seemingly helpless virgin-mother. But the happiness of your Christmas will depend on your realization that this Baby will grow up to speak to you, to tell you things about Himself, about yourself, about this world, about the next world, that you will have to believe. There will be deep, dark, humanly unfathomable mysteries contained in some of the things He will say, but you will accept them because He gives you His word that they are true.

Moreover, your belief in Him must be thorough-going, uncompromising, complete. There are different ways of professing a belief in Christ, but only one is the correct and saving way. Some say that they believe in Christ, but only as a kind of legendary or fictional ideal of brotherly love. These do not even know Him, and certainly

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they do not believe in Him in any real sense of the word. Then there are those who profess to believe in Christ in a general way, as their Redeemer, but not in the sense that they must accept every particular doctrine He ever stated and every precept He ever laid down for His followers. These are the ones who say, "We need no dogmas, no theological truths revealed by Christ. We need only Christ as our Redeemer."

For a truly merry Christmas, you need to believe in Christ as your Redeemer, but you also need to believe every other doctrine He came into the world to reveal. If there was any point in God's becoming man, there was an important point in everything He ever said to you as a man. You can prepare well for Christmas by reading through a small Catholic catechism, which is a summary of the many things Christ revealed to the world. At each question and answer of the catechism say, "O Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. O Lord, I thank Thee for the gift of faith; make my faith more strong."

3. You need to obey Christ.

It is very strange that religious sects have come into being which made light of obedience to Christ as a requirement for salvation. They state that "belief" or "faith" is enough for salvation. They say that "good works" or "obedience to laws" are not meritorious but only at best "manifestations" of faith in Christ, which is the one thing that will save you.

Such notions are strange because Christ made it clear that it is possible to have faith in Him as the divine Redeemer, and yet to lose salvation through failure to obey Him. "If any man love Me, he will keep My word." "Not he that saith 'Lord, Lord,' to Me

shall be saved, but he that doth the will of My Father." "If you would enter into life, keep My commandments." "Every branch that does not bring forth good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire."

In these and a hundred other quotations, Christ was clearly assuming that He was talking to people, or about people, who had faith in Him as their Redeemer. But He was impressing upon them the fact that unless they also obeyed His commandments, they would not be saved.

Moreover, He commanded His followers in two ways. In the first way, He directly told them what He wanted them to do. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter . . . heaven." "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you." "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you." "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments: honor thy father and thy mother; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal."

In the second way, He commanded indirectly, by giving his authority to human representatives, and promising them that He would guard them from error in the use of it. To the first rulers of His Church, His own apostles with Peter at their head, He said: "I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven. . . . He that hears you hears Me; he that despises you despises Me."

Disobedience to any direct and serious command of Christ, or to any serious command of His Church, puts a soul into the state of mortal sin, and outside the reach of the essential benefits, the everlasting blessings of Christmas. You need to be in a state of obedience to Christ to enjoy a merry

Christmas. That means you need to be free from the stain of a single mortal sin, and from the death-dealing effect of any habit of mortal sin.

To attain such freedom you need to examine your life carefully, discounting every argument that the world or the devil or your flesh can offer you for clinging to a mortal sin, thinking only of the supreme importance of doing in all things what Christ wants you to do. And if you find that there is something in your life gravely at variance with the direct commands of Christ or the serious commands of the Church, then you can ready yourself for Christmas only by a humble confession, submission to the forgiving power of a priest of Christ, and the determination rather to die than again separate yourself from Christ as your sins separated you from Him before. There is no real joy in Christmas, indeed there is no meaning in Christmas, for any soul that lives through Christmas in a state of mortal sin.

4. *You need to suffer for Christ.*

There is something of an anomaly in the very wish, "A merry Christmas." By it we express the hope that our friends will be supremely happy on Christmas and ever after. Yet even as we make this wish, we must be mindful, if we know Christ and His teachings well, that those who believe in Him and obey Him, who expect the salvation that He came into the world to give, will have to suffer for Him before supreme happiness can be theirs. In a very real sense it can be said that by wishing friends a merry Christmas we are actually wishing them the courage and the strength to suffer for Jesus Christ. In another way of speaking, by the wish, "a merry Christmas," we wish our friends the future happiness of heaven, that can

be attained only by those who endure suffering for and with Jesus Christ in the present.

So it is for ourselves. Sadly we deceive ourselves if we look to Christmas as the end of all suffering on earth; if we prepare to complain on Christmas or after Christmas that Christ has not relieved us of all our aches and pains, our troubles of spirit, our difficulties with those around us, our bitter struggle against temptation. He came to save us from *our* sins through *His* suffering, not only in the rude stable, but through the poverty of His youth, the rigors of His public life, the plots of His enemies, and His final terrible death. He had a right to say to all who would be saved through Him, "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me."

It is very important, then, that you prepare for Christmas by girding yourself for carrying the necessary cross that following Christ will entail. That cross will be offered to you in two forms.

First, in the form of the price you will have to pay to renounce every sinful gratification the world or your flesh will offer you. It is not easy to keep up a running battle against impure thoughts and desires; to sever yourself from occasions of sin that have become very dear; to face up to the world's ridicule when it calls you a fool for not adopting some of its favorite sins such as contraception. But you cannot rightly celebrate Christmas unless you make yourself ready to do these things for Christ.

Second, in the form of the unpredictable and unavoidable sufferings that God in His providence will send into your life. Sickiness, bereavement, family trouble, financial worry—being a Christian cannot free you from these

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things, rather it must make you ready for them in peace. You are ready to celebrate Christmas properly only if you have prepared your shoulders for the cross. You can do so effectively by making the way of the cross every day during Advent.

5. You need to grow in the likeness of Christ.

Being a Christian means something far beyond and greater than merely being obedient to Christ and suffering for Him. It means being transformed into Christ. It means finding fulfilled in oneself those words of St. John about Christ: "As many as received Him He gave them power to become His children . . . born not of the world, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but born of God." It means applying to oneself St. Paul's description of the followers of Christ: "Christ is the head and you are the members. . . . You are the body of Christ and members one of another."

The point is that as a Christian you should celebrate Christmas with the glorious realization that the humiliation of God in becoming man was turned into your elevation toward Godhead—into your participation in the nature of God by grace. And that sublime fact has two practical applications in your daily living.

First, the elevation of your nature through grace was made dependent on

the sacraments that Christ gave you. Some of the sacraments you receive only once, and are thereby marked forever with a special likeness to God. Others you can receive often, and are urged by Christ Himself to receive often, so that you will grow in the new life you have received, even as you have grown in your natural life from childhood to your adult state. Especially does Christ urge you to receive His Body and Blood in Holy Communion often, without which you cannot live by grace, and with which you can grow in grace from day to day. The perfect preparation for Christmas is by the reception of Holy Communion every day during Advent.

The other practical application of your elevation by grace into participation in the nature of God is that you are bound to feel yourself under obligation to make your conduct, your habits, your character, more an image of Christ's the older you grow. The saints, who were nothing other than model Christians, made the imitation of Christ the one great goal of their lives. So must you make it, if you are properly to celebrate Christmas. That means making a real attempt at growing toward perfection—perfection in patience, perfection in charity, perfection in resignation, perfection in all the virtues so manifest in Him "in whom you live and move and have your being."

Candle in the Window

The Irish brought to America the custom of placing lighted candles in the windows at Christmas. The custom began in Ireland during the time of the persecution to help guide priests into the homes of the faithful so that the priest could celebrate Holy Mass there. To their persecutors the Irish explained that they left the burning candles in the windows so that Mary and Joseph, looking for a place to stay, could be guided to their homes. The English regarded this as superstition and did not interfere.



For Wives and Husbands Only

Donald F. Miller

Doubtful Dispensation for Marriage

Problem: I am a Catholic girl who married a man who had never been baptized in any Church, and we were married before a priest. At that time the priest was told by the man that he had been baptized in the Christian Church. Some time after the marriage I found out that he had never been baptized at all. My question is, was this a valid marriage? I remember reading in *THE LIGUORIAN* that a marriage of a Catholic to an unbaptized person is invalid unless a dispensation is obtained. I am now divorced from the man, and am still in my twenties, so the matter is very important to me.

Solution: The impediment to marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person is indeed vastly different from the impediment between a Catholic and a validly baptized non-Catholic. The former is what is called a "diriment" impediment, i.e., one which would make a marriage invalid unless a dispensation from it were granted by the Church. The latter situation requires a dispensation, but even without it the marriage would be valid.

I am afraid, however, that this important distinction will not save you from the indissoluble bond of marriage. That is because in practically all cases in which a bishop grants a dispensation for a Catholic to marry a baptized non-Catholic, he includes, for safety's sake, a dispensation to marry the person in case there was no baptism or in case that the baptism was invalid. This is done universally because it is impossible to be certain that the so-called baptism of every non-Catholic was truly a valid one. Rather than take a chance on authorizing an invalid marriage, it is the practice of the Church to put the two dispensations together.

It should not be difficult to check this matter in detail if you are inclined to do so. All you have to do is to ask the priest who married you, or any priest in your diocese, whether the dispensation to marry a baptized non-Catholic is ever given without the added precaution of a dispensation from the impediment to marry an unbaptized person. I think you will find that on the very printed form of the previous dispensation the latter is included "for safety's sake."

there's something about a child

You can't think about Christmas
without thinking about
children. Should not these
thoughts be yours?

Francis M. Lee

LAST week in Tulsa we had a Television Telethon for the benefit of children afflicted with cerebral palsy. It is the illness that so severely damages the brain, often leaving the child a physical cripple, sad to look upon. Tulsa and northeast Oklahoma do not add up to a whole lot of people numerically, but there were twenty-five thousand dollars for the youngsters when the last whistle blew. Hail Tulsa, and let us not be looking down our noses at Oklahoma. People are what they seem down here, and will back it up—a simplicity much to be recommended. There are exceptions, but why start another Civil War?

Anyway, this is not a Christmas eulogy for Oklahoma, so let's get back to the children. There they were on T.V. with their braces and crutches, heads and hands swaying, spastic, meaningless, untutored by a hurt brain. They were their own best appeal for help, and the money flowed in. Thousands of school children banged on every door in their neigh-

borhood until they finally ended up with jars, buckets, bags, and Davy Crockett hats pouring out four thousand dollars into the studio mammoth fish bowl. We saw it all. The performers, working eighteen consecutive hours without reimbursement, were magnificent, and their verbal and artistic appeals were worthy of a Demosthenes, Edwin Booth, or Winston C.

But, as we watched this grand thing, something else came to mind. We will probably bring it up somewhere along the line, but right now, let's go back a few years to a little girl named Kathy. She did not come off as well, humanly speaking, as the cerebral palsy children, for Kathy was the little one who wandered into the deep, abandoned shaft, or rather, pipe, and was brought out dead. The television cameras carried the tragedy into millions of American homes. Her whimperings were recorded on a microphone strung down into the pipe, and strong men wept, and dug past all fatigue and care, for this little bit of our humanity. The people of a nation honestly prayed, prayed for the young, dainty, stainless life of little Kathy. A mite of baby life, and a nation was unstrung. The tragedy was a cathartic, draining away our smallnesses for awhile. Why do you think we reacted that way? Was it all feeling and emotion? A lot of it was.

But, happily, it was more than just feeling. Worked into our human fibre is the dear decision of the Creator that we are not mere animals, to whelp

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cubs and forget them. Life is something good and precious to us, to be maintained and defended. Moses cried it from his mountain top with God's own words, "Thou shalt not kill." Nation and state mercilessly track down the murderer of this good gift of life. In our own hearts we recognize the bounty of living, so we dig into our pockets for our little cripples, and we dig into the earth for our Kathys.

Something else comes to mind, but it will probably show up later.

Talking about life, there is even a most honored profession whose duty and oath is the preservation of human life. Our good doctors, along with their staunch allies and assistants, the nurses, have hardly undertaken long study, daily responsibility, and often, perennial self denial, simply because of feeling or emotion. Sympathy, pity, a sense of the job well done, may sometimes inspire them, but such rootless feelings or surgings would not very long balance the scale against stench and bacteria, grind and failure, unpaid bills and 2 a.m. calls. Life itself must be important, nay sacred, to them, and when it ceases to be of prime importance, they should break their own scalpels and rip off the epaulets.

No wonder that a good doctor must go white-hot angry at the very concept of euthanasia, that killing off (mercifully, of course) of the old people, etc. He had entered the great medical lists because human life was a good, to be fostered, protected, and dared for. Life, unqualified life, was worthy of his dedication and his oath. Even Hippocrates, who fathered the oath at the dawn of modern medicine, made his students swear not to give poison to a patient.

And now, euthanasia! The bitter-

ness of that word to a sincere doctor! Bitter because the very word, euthanasia, means "good death" in its Greek origin. The good death! Death is good! He has based a lifetime of hard work on the proposition that life is good, and now he is told that death is the good. On which day, at which hour, in whose life, does death suddenly become good, and life itself become a bad thing, arbitrarily to be cut off? Upon what announcement board in what hospital has the Giver of life ever hung such a bulletin? What doctor can ever categorically prove to the hilt that a euthanasia victim would not have made peace with his God if allowed to live an hour longer? How many rivers will it take to wash clean the hands of these Pilates? Where find the miniscule ant-hill that does not trap the echo of that final, damning bravado:

"I am innocent of the blood of this just man."

We are proud and secure in our general American veto of euthanasia; proud that, to our doctors, life is the good. Something else comes to mind, but we will run into it in these seemingly anything but Christmas thoughts.

If we might, at the moment, go on a few days past Christmas, we would find the Church commemorating the death of a group of unhappily famous babies; rather say their parents were unhappy, for these little ones are the Holy Innocents. Theirs is really part of the Christmas story, their death inextricably woven into the first threads of the Master's own earthly life. Humanly speaking, it seems a somewhat purple patch on the golden Christmas tapestry. They had to die simply because they were young males, and because any of them might be the Prince of Peace. So they were mur-

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dered because the brave Herod wanted the Head of the young Christ, lest He live to take over His rightful sceptre.

We might want to cry out against the Providence that permitted such a sequence. We find ourselves again the stout defenders of life, as we think of the mothers and fathers who had to watch their child, the fruit of their love, smashed, stabbed, beheaded.

Something comes to mind, and this time we will let it come. The modern world, as we call those arrayed against God and the things of God, likes human beings to live, but only on the modern world's terms. These people will contribute everything they have to make a cripple not a cripple, for the moderns hate to see this fine thing, life, defaced. They hate awkwardness on the good human scene. The moderns toy with euthanasia because the old, the helpless, can be a blight on the fair countenance of ruddy life. The moderns weep over the dead Kathy and the sacrificed Holy Innocents. They weep because the little ones are cute, and are dead. It wasn't human life that mattered. It was cute human life.

The child in the womb is not very cute. So, last year, Americans killed eight hundred thousand of them.

Where did these people ever earn the right to mourn at a Kathy's grave? The honest right to give a nickel to a crippled child? Oh, let them mourn and let them contribute, but only in the name of remorse and shame at what they have done to life.

And are we, meanwhile, simply preposterous to bring up such a thing at the Christmas season? Hardly. This is the time for gifts, and what do we think is our first and greatest gift? Our life, of course. Without that, there are no other gifts. No tinsel, no turkey,

nothing.

In a way, Christmas Eve is the feast-day of unborn children. It is a day forever hallowed by the Son of God, Who was pleased to wait, as these children wait. He was at the mercy of the Bethlehem people, at the later mercy of Herod's schemes, as a child today is at the mercy of his parents, as he waits for breath and love and his heritage of immortality. Beyond all else, he waits for baptism, the precious, necessary, spiritual life of the soul he already possesses. So they wait for their great Christmas gift of life. We are hardly saying that every child is waiting to be born on Christmas day; rather we are hoping that in the warmth and generous glow of a Christmas day, somewhere, some husband and wife will slough off the miserable miserliness that is eating at the heart of them, and let their baby live.

Out of all the endless centuries of the endless eternities, how few the years in which parents have this power to give life. For the narrowing span of twenty or twenty-five years out of forever, they are the gods of creation, master and mistress of "who shall live, whose life be snuffed out, whose life not even begin." The God of fertility has let them be fertile, and yet some of them will degrade themselves below their noble realm of thinking and loving progenitors, until they seem less than an insipid amoeba that has at least the instinctive grace heartily to produce its own kind, and let the God of creation worry about supply and demand for the next generation.

In case all this sounds too much like a crusade (which it is), and in further case that we seem to portray the modern world as a band of Herod's men-at-arms on a rampage for innocent babes, — well, Sweden has

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legitimized abortion. Their murder-count of unborn children went from four hundred to five thousand within a year. Now, there, sirs, is a noble piece of legislation for you. Packing the jury on a baby! Grown-up men of law condemning to death a helpless, ten-inch, five-pound, unborn baby, without defense, counsel, and *in absentia*! Or if you will, — exhibit A. *The corpus delicti*, — a bleeding baby, murdered by those who, themselves, would hate to have been deprived of life. And it's all legal! A perfect little body, hands, toes, nose, ears, even pink coral finger-nails that were meant for a mother to wonder at and kiss,— all thrown into a refuse can because

this little one has been framed to take the rap for a double crime, — the inhibited love and the uninhibited lust of his parents.

They didn't even give it a name to take into its eternity. They will have to call it "You" on judgment day! "We're sorry, You."

Don't worry. God will give it a name, even as He reduces the parents to that final anonymity, "Depart, YOU cursed, into everlasting hellfire."

We are in the season of Advent. And Advent means the Coming. Of course, it means, above all, the coming of the Christ Child. But it is a fine time for parents to mull things over, God bless 'em.

Newcomer

A teacher requested her small pupils to draw a picture suggested by the hymn, "Silent Night." One little girl handed in a really beautiful drawing but the teacher was much puzzled by an extremely fat little boy standing near the group in the Nativity scene. She asked the child who the obese little stranger might be and she replied:

"Oh, that's round John Virgin."

To The Wind At Bethlehem

O winter wind
Blowing so wild,
Be gentle with
This little child

Who lies on straw
Trembling with cold,
O winter wind
Be not so bold!

How little warmth
In all the earth
To welcome His
So forlorn birth;

How few warm hearts
Will this child find!
Cold winter wind,
Be kind, be kind!

LGM

Jarvis Finds Christmas

For many years he had lost it — at least its real meaning and its joy. Then he found it — in a very simple way.

Ernest F. Miller

JARVIS was a strange man. He was one man out of a thousand who found little joy in Christmas. Christmas to him was not just like any other day of the year, as always has been the case with so many Christian and un-Christian people; in a sense it was worse than any other day.

A Christmas could be the finest as far as atmospheric conditions were concerned — miles and mountains of soft, white snow, a crisp and sub-freezing temperature that tinted cheeks and made filmy clouds of human breath, soothing carols and rollicking songs that filled homes and churches and the very air with good cheer and glad tidings and promises of peace on earth and good will to men—and Jarvis still felt no real joy.

A Christmas could be the most consoling and satisfying of any Christmas ever known to men as far as the spiritual blessings and graces were concerned—and Jarvis still was unmoved, untouched, unimpressed. His soul and senses were like stones, like sticks of wood. Something had died within him.

It should not be said that he found *no* joy at Christmas. He enjoyed the family turkey a little bit; he felt satisfaction in the fact that his wife and children seemed to be happy as a result of the spiritual significance of the feast; he lost his interior limpness to some extent at the sight of the grog, the punch and the less seasonal and more prosaic potions that flowed so freely over the holidays.

But that was about the end of it. Instead of joy, a kind of regret or nostalgia took possession of him on the 25th of December each year, as though something irreclaimable had been lost that once was his. Christmas was for him an accusation, a condemnation. The feeling started vaguely with the decorations in the store windows and on the street corners. It grew with the passing of the weeks until finally on Christmas day he felt more forlorn and lonesome than on any other day of the year.

This was all very mysterious in view of the fact that Jarvis was a Christian. It is easy to understand how a pagan or an enemy of Christ would be unable to acquire the spirit of Christmas and feel the joy that should accompany that spirit. But why a Christian, one who was born in the tradition of the Christian faith and who had been brought up on Christian principles from the moment he drew his first breath?

Could it be that his conscience was burdened? Sin could take away a man's peace of mind and vitiate the meaning of Christmas for him. Sin and Christmas surely could not go together. Either the one or the other would have to give way in the life of a man who accepted the meaning of Christmas and acted on its implications. Perhaps that had been the trouble on pre-

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vious Christmases. But Jarvis could discover no serious sin of which he had been guilty this Christmas.

He went to confession anyway. He went in great sincerity and resolution. There had to be some way of drying up the coldness, the deadness that lay like pools of vinegar upon the bottom of his soul. The priest was most understanding. He told him not to worry, that his soul was in good condition. He said nothing about the danger of possessing a fortune. He merely advised Jarvis to try to be like Christ.

It was kind of the priest to tell him not to worry. But mere words did not help. What was wrong with him? Why was he so different from other people? They hardly had an extra dollar to their name. But they were sending presents to their friends, preparing big dinners for their families, and giving huge baskets of food to the poor and the homeless.

And in the midst of it all were laughter and song and good wishes. These people seemed so happy, so unworried, so taken over by the spirit of Christmas. One would imagine that they not only had the possessions of kings and the bankrolls of millionaires but also that they did not have a worry in the world. Christmas for them was the great day, the day on which they were to rejoice and be glad.

Jarvis would have had to be blind not to observe this phenomenon on the part of most of the poor and ordinary Christians around him. It was at least one day in the year when they practiced Christianity in spirit as well as in word. True, he tried to be blind and oblivious to the sight. He tried to rationalize it away, to give it a merely natural explanation. Custom. Human respect. The pressure of advertising.

But the more he tried to explain away the spirit of Christmas in the thoughts and actions of his neighbors, the more their conduct became to him an accusation. Without saying a word they were accusing him of not practicing Christianity. And that was one of the reasons for his unhappiness at Christmastime. That was why he could not enter into the spirit of the feast. Subconsciously he felt that there was something in him that made it impossible for him to be a real part of the feast or of the people who celebrated the feast. He felt that he was an outsider, an intruder, a hypocrite.

It had not always been like this. Before Jarvis became a wealthy man he was just like the rest of the people. For many years he had had very little of this world's goods. But what he did have, he had shared with others, that is, what was not *absolutely* necessary for his livelihood and that of his family, he had shared with others. He did not give in the sense that his neighbors and friends received from him only the crumbs that fell from his table, but they received of the very loaf of bread from which he himself ate.

In those days when Christmas was over, he was dead broke. And not only that. On top of his being dead broke there was a small pile of bills, the result of his generosity, that it would take a bit of extra work to cut down. Yet, none of this had bothered him. On the contrary it had increased the feeling of well-being and joy that always took charge of him during the Christmas season. Our Lord would help him, for he had tried to be like Our Lord in the celebration of His birthday.

Now it was different. Now he was a man of wealth and position. Since

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the end of the second world war he had accumulated more than a million dollars. The money rested safely in banks in cash and securities. Besides this fortune already amassed, he had an income of at least fifty thousand dollars a year.

It seemed that he could not stop the money from coming in. It started with a little business that he had before the war. This business brought in just enough to allow himself and his family to be comfortable. No more than that. He and his family had clothes, food, a home, a car, vacations each year. There was little more they needed.

The war changed all that. There was a demand for everything during and after the war. A man could set up a business or a factory in a barn and almost over night find himself with so much work and so many orders and so much profit flowing in that he had to readjust his whole way of thought and life.

That's the way it was with Jarvis. In a sense his wealth was thrust upon him. But in the very process of wealth being thrust upon him, his ideas and feelings about Christmas and the meaning of Christmas underwent a change. He found himself a different man from what he had been before. He found himself clinging to his wealth with jealous possessiveness, sitting upon his little fortune the way a hen sits upon an egg that she has laid. It became harder and harder for him to consider himself as he was before he became rich, as he would be if he were no longer rich.

Who is the Christian who does not know that the spirit of Christmas is the spirit of *giving*? In one sense of the word that is the very definition of Christmas. Christmas is named after

Christ. Christ came down on earth on the first Christmas to give Himself completely to the world for the eternal happiness of the world. Never had there been such a *giving*, nor would there be until the end.

The example was not lost on men of good will. Christians the world over began commemorating the tremendous *giving* of Christ by a generous *giving* themselves, especially on the birthday of Christ which is Christmas day. So it went on through the years and through the centuries. Christmas came to mean nothing at all in the mind of the Christian if it did not take in unselfish *giving*, not of the crumbs but of the substance, after the model of the Infant God become man lying on the straw in a stable.

How about a Christian who owned a million dollars on Christmas day, a million dollars with his own name written upon it, guarded and protected so heavily that even the tiny Christ in His manger would have to call upon a bit of His divine power to get a look at it in order to find out how much it was? The poor and the dispossessed? They could not get to see it if they fell down on their knees and begged.

Jarvis now knew. Back in the corner of his mind he always knew. In the vaults of his bank lay the cause of his troubled mind. *There* was the poison that rendered tasteless the sweet food of Christmas. Why should he fight it any longer? Why should he try to hide it?

He was a Christian, a follower of Christ. Yet, he refused to follow Christ, the One who had "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant" for the sake of the children of men, allowing Himself to become so poor that He had "not even a stone

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on which to lay His head." Jarvis refused to empty his bulging pockets which held but a fraction of the huge sum in the bank. Because of his bulging pockets he could not get into the crib, even sidewise. Everybody knows that only those find joy at Christmas who succeed in getting into the stable and looking upon the shivering body of the Infant in the manger. Really, Jarvis was only a part-time Christian. He was one of those who stayed in the town of Bethlehem that night and danced and sang.

This was neither a pleasant nor an easy truth to accept. It was not pleasant because no man likes to be brought face to face with an ugly vice that he has been trying not to see for years. And it was not easy because he did not know how best he could dispose of his fortune even if he decided to get rid of it.

Without a pencil or a paper he could figure out what his conscience had figured out subconsciously years before. He would not have to get rid of all his money. Only that which he did not need and could never use. Of course, good arguments could be advanced for his keeping all his money without sin. It was just that submitting to those arguments was what made him unhappy.

Thus, his children. He had three children of college age. Surely it would take no more than a hundred thousand dollars, at most a hundred and fifty thousand, to see them through the best college in the country. He could put aside the money for their education and still have eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars left in the bank.

And himself and his wife. They were crowding sixty. Suppose it cost them ten thousand a year to live in

decent comfort for the rest of their lives. If they lived fifteen years longer, the bill would be a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Throw in another fifty thousand for safety's sake. That would still leave the tidy sum of seven hundred thousand dollars to line his coffin and to fertilize the soil with which the dust of his bones would mix. No Christian would want that to happen. "Dig the grave and let me lie. Glad did I live and gladly die. And I lay me down with a will."

But Jarvis was finding it extremely hard to pull out the roots of his attachment. Here was the money. All of it could not possibly be spent. It was spoiling his Christmases and his Christianity. Yet he kept discovering objections to its immediate dispensation.

To whom should he give it? People of all climes and colors were clamoring for aid—home missionaries, foreign missionaries, summer camps for poor children, winter resorts for sick children. Every delivery of mail brought a bundle of requests from the Y.M.C.A., the Red Cross, the Indians of South Dakota, the orphans of South America. Whom could he trust? Who was honest and who dishonest? It was impossible to find out for sure. The best thing to do was not to give the fortune away at all. So his selfishness cried out.

Over and above that objection was the one of prestige and position. Jarvis was known as a man of wealth in his community. If he gave away his wealth, they would think that he was crazy. They would leave him, exclude him from their circle, have nothing more to do with him. That would be difficult to take. So his pride cried out.

Finally there was the consideration of the future. Who knew what depressions, what wars, what catastrophes

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and economic calamities lay in store for the United States? Inflation could cause a million dollars to be worth no more than a thousand. If a lot of money was not kept in reserve, a man could very easily end up a pauper. So his fear cried out.

That was the way the arguments went in Jarvis's mind for more than seven years. Because he was unwilling to find answers to these objections he was unable to find peace of heart. That was why he wanted to go to bed on Christmas eve and Christmas night and *not even hear* the sweet words and melodies of "Silent Night" and "Ades-te Fideles."

And then, all of a sudden, almost as though by a miracle his chance came. And not only a chance but also a change of mind. It was as though the Infant had visited his house in order to give him one last opportunity to prove his Christianity. Either it was now or never. He felt that this was final.

Jarvis's parish was in the suburb of a large city. It was a small parish. Surrounding the town were three or four other towns, each having its own parish of about equal size. All the parishes had grade schools. But definitely all the parishes together could not afford a Catholic high school. The boys and girls had to go to the public high school after graduating from their own parochial school. In consequence many of the children nearly lost the faith. The exposure to religious neutralism, and the religious black-out that of necessity had to be a part of the public school system, brought about a weakening, indeed almost a collapse in the beliefs of more than one child. Something had to be done.

This was the place where money, a large sum of money could and would

do the most good, not only for the moment but for years and years that were still to come. The Catholic high school would be built only if some rich man would come along and give the thing a start. Jarvis felt that he was the man to do it.

He called on his parish priest and explained what was in his mind. A meeting of prominent men of all the parishes was scheduled. He found out how much it would cost to build a new high school. He found out that everybody wanted a new high school. That was all that was necessary. A few days later he called on his pastor again. This time he had a check to offer. *The check was for seven hundred thousand dollars.* This was Jarvis's substance, his loaf of bread. He was done with the dispensing of crumbs. It was either the whole loaf or nothing. That's the way Christ did it. He could hardly improve on Christ.

On Christmas day at midnight Mass the news was given to the people. The priest in the pulpit told what Jarvis had done. They would merely (on a small scale according to their means) have to follow his example.

Jarvis was embarrassed. He did not know that a production was going to be made of his return to the Christianity of Christ. But at the same time he felt glad. In fact, for the first time in almost a decade he did not have the dead and dreary feeling in his heart that he knew so well and dreaded so deeply each year during the Christmas season. The feeling was now gone. Something else had taken its place.

He was surprised to discover tears in his eyes. Why, he hadn't cried in so long a time that he couldn't remember the last time so strange a thing had happened. He'd better not let his

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wife or children see the tears. They'd think that he was sick. He'd better cover up. How? There was only one way. He opened his mouth and began to sing. Never, never had the melody and the words of "Silent Night" and

"Adeste Fideles" sounded so sweet. It was almost like the angels' voices over the manger. At least, that's the way it sounded to Jarvis. And Jarvis should know. He was certain now that he had found the Christmas spirit.

Pre-Marriage CLINIC

Donald F. Miller

Building a Marriage on Sin

Problem: I am fifteen years old and a year ago I fell in love with a boy five years older than I am. I know that everybody advises against a person as young as I am getting married, but my case is an exception. We are really and truly in love and the boy is able to support me if we get married. But my parents will not consider this for a moment; they do not even want me to keep company. So I have to see the boy secretly. Our love is so great that we just could not help falling into sin. I do want to love God and to go to confession, but I just can't be sorry for these sins. In fact, I want to have a baby so that my parents will be forced to let us get married. Then we can both go to confession and live good Catholic lives. Am I so very wrong?

Solution: Nothing could be more wrong or foolish than to think that you can plan a happy future on the basis of mortal sin. Do you not realize, child, that deliberate mortal sins, such as yours, crucified your Saviour, and that any self-denial or suffering on your part is better than making yourself guilty of that kind of cruelty to Our Blessed Lord again? How can He give you the happiness you want (which only He can give) if you say to Him: "First I shall nail you to your cross again; then I shall come to you and ask for your blessing on what I have gained by my sins?"

You say that you cannot help falling into sin. Don't you realize that in saying that you are making a mockery of the whole life and death of Christ, Who came into the world just to make it possible for everybody who truly loves Him to avoid mortal sin?

There is always a way out of problems like yours short of deliberate mortal sin. Maybe it is God's will that you marry now, young as you are. Tell your whole story to an understanding priest just as you have set it down in your letter. He will be able to advise you and guide you into the right action. But before you do so, decide once and for all that you will make yourself deserving of God's help and grace by giving up the sins you have committed, and by avoiding the occasions that made it so easy for you to fall. Then God will forgive you in a good confession, and will help you in ways you don't even dream of now.

Thoughts for the . . .

..... Christmas Catholics

Howard Morin

This is the sad side of Christmas: to see so many who would love Christ as a Baby, but reject Him as a Man and as God. Could one of them be you?

THERE wasn't much joy in the heart of the young priest as he drove along the winding road to his little church in the country to sing the midnight Mass. The stars were shining, the air was brisk and cold, a perfect night for Christmas. He remembered Judy Garland singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and he tried to sing it like she did. The imitation was atrocious. His voice would be better for the high Mass. It wouldn't make a great deal of difference how he sang that night because his audience would be made up of the same small nucleus, old Catholic families who appreciated his coming, who would give him a bag of butter beans after Mass, or a small box of pecans. His church was centered in a community infested with heretics and bigots. The heretics were usually painfully polite. The bigots—well, they despised the Roman collar, hated the Catholic Church, and spread stories about the nuns that would make Mickey Spillane turn purple with embarrassment. Hence, no joy.

No actor ever registered a more perfect "double take" than the young priest when he turned off the main highway to his church along the familiar gravel road. There were a *hundred* cars on the parking lot, whereas on an ordinary Sunday there would be twenty, thirty at the most. A large crowd was gathered in front of the

church. The country set was running high with the Christmas spirit.

Before Mass, the young priest turned back the velvet curtain that separated the sacristy from the church and took a look at his congregation. He could hardly believe it. There were people in church who hadn't shown up for a year, some who had never been there before.

There was the old gent who lived on the McGuire Road. The priest had gone to see him four times with the hope of validating his marriage. He would have no part of it. "I'm married. Married at the court house. Sure, we're Catholics, my wife and me. What difference does it make who says the words, just so they're said?" With one swaggering statement he punctured the logic of Christ: "What you bind on earth, I bind in heaven." But the old gent was in church tonight because it was Christmas.

In the last pew of the church was the young married couple, she a Catholic, he a non-Catholic. They had three children, one after the other. According to the husband, that was enough. The young priest had gone to their home one night, at her invitation, to see if he could settle the matter. He tried to tell the non-Catholic husband that birth-prevention was a serious sin, not only for Catholics, but non-Cath-

olics as well. The answer was simple and final: "I don't believe it. We've got three kids already. Believe me, if she gets pregnant again I'll leave her and the kids to starve." That was three years ago. The young wife hadn't gone to Holy Communion since. She even missed Mass occasionally and gave the excuse that going to Mass didn't do her any good. But she was there tonight—Christmas—and by some miracle of persuasion she had managed to bring her husband. Too bad Christmas didn't last all year round.

As the young priest looked over the gathering crowd he became more amazed by the minute. The young girl who had thrown a tantrum at home one evening and refused to go to a Catholic high school was there. After four months in the public high school she was suddenly whisked out of town. She stayed out of town for the rest of the year. Some say she went to her aunt's home in St. Louis to have her baby. This was the first time she had come to the little church in the country for over a year.

There was even a Protestant minister in church! He was dressed in a light brown suit and, believe it or not, Roman collar! The young priest had met the minister one bright afternoon at the home of a Catholic family. He, the minister, had done a pretty fair job of proseletysing. The Catholic family was not well educated, so the minister's suave display of platitudes had cut deep furrows into their simple faith. "When you confess your sins, go into your closet and confess them to the Lord Jesus." "When you pray, close your door and in the privacy of your own room pray to the Almighty." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!" The Protestant minister was in church tonight, and

so was the Catholic family he had tried to impress with his empty platitudes. Ironically, they were all seated in the same pew.

At the stroke of midnight the Mass began with the same quiet dignity as it had a million times before. The choir was not too good, neither was the organist. But they would get through it all. Thank God there was one high school girl in the choir. She had sung "Galway Bay" in the school play and the enthusiasm with which she was received had built up her confidence. She was long on confidence, short on voice; but right now confidence was of the essence.

The choir came through the "Kyrie" without a scratch. The "Gloria" wasn't too good. Then came the orations, the epistle, the stirring Gospel of Christmas night, and then the sermon. The young priest was nervous when he turned around to face his people. It was easy to talk to them on Sunday mornings. The usual twenty or thirty good Catholic families were hungry for spiritual food, and they never noticed how the young priest stumbled over his words. They knew nothing about the fancy nuances of diction and inflection and gestures. It was easy to talk to them.

But it would be different tonight. His audience was larger. Some among them were prejudiced. Others were there just to see what went on. It seemed like the proper thing to do on Christmas night, so they all came to church.

"My dear friends," the young priest began, "on this holy night, when all the world is tingling with excitement at the prospect of another Christmas, it is good to see so many of you gathered here in this little church. It is good to know that in this small, iso-

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lated corner of the world, there are so many of you who feel the need and desire to adore a little Child in the crib. There are others, however, who will shrug off the desire and need of the Christ Child in their lives.

"On this very day there will be men who will use this birthday of Our Lord as an occasion to get drunk. There are women who will not shrink from sin even on this holy night. There are thousands who will spend hours trimming the Christmas trees in their homes, but will not attend Mass because it takes too long. The television screens will be filled with one drama after another today, and I dare say that men, women, and children the world over will spend from eight to ten hours before them. But the drama of the Christmas Mass will be witnessed only by a few like yourselves. Today the Christian world will accept the Christ-Child because it seems like the right thing to do. But when the Child grows up to be Christ the Man, they refuse to listen to Him.

"How many Christians will stop during these holy days before a display crib in a department store to witness in plaster of Paris the first Christmas night? Their hearts will be stirred deeply because this is a Child. But when the Child grows up and says: 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church,' they will have no part with Christ. They want a religion of convenience. This convenience is easily come by when you can say: one religion is as good as another.

"Husbands and wives will kneel before the crib to adore the Child on Christmas. For those who have had their families, in the face of criticism from the 'wise' ones of the world, the sight of the Child will warm their hearts. For those unfortunate millions who could have no children of their

own, the Child will tug at their hearts. But for those who have been 'careful' the Child in the crib must look like an avenging judge. All the excuses of health and finance and housing pale into insignificance when looked at in the light of the Child's eyes. 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones. . . . Do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be given you besides.'

"In ordinary life it is natural to respond to the gurgling and chuckling of a young baby. A click of the tongue, a tie waved across the face, a finger touched to the chin makes the child gurgle and chuckle all the more. This is the easy kind of adoration many Christians give the Christ-Child. But when He grows up and says: 'Whoever puts away his wife . . . causes her to commit adultery,' they want no part with Him. They find an excuse in big words: mental cruelty, incompatibility, etc. They can all be reduced to the three dimensions of the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life. Christ, the Man-God, will suffer no such easy gurgling and chuckling of modern minds to pass as adoration.

"There would be fewer people in church on Christmas night if they understood that the Christ-Child is not a child alone, but God. If Christmas could hear the quiet voice of the grown Man filled with an intense love of souls, they would not so easily run to the crib. For at the crib they would hear Him say things that would make them flinch with guilt.

"During the Christmas season Catholic mothers will bring their small children to the crib for a visit on a

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quiet afternoon. They will whisper: 'This is Jesus.' And the little ones will be thrilled. In a month's time these same Catholic mothers will become enraged at the Sisters in the school because one of their little darlings got a 'D' on its report card. Then comes the rat race. The mother goes from the teacher in the classroom to the principal to the pastor of the parish. When she goes away licking her wounds, she gets in the last word: 'If I were rich, like Mrs. So-and-so, my child would not have gotten a bad report. I'll go higher. I'll report this to the Archbishop!' And away we go! The Child in the crib would like to break through and say: 'If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.' From the looks of things He doesn't get through.

"At Christmas time the Altar Society works together for hours to put up the Christmas decorations. All this work, all these preparations, are for the Child in the crib who is the same God as the grown up Christ. He is the same Christ Who later in life said: 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. . . .' Two weeks after the Christmas season, when the tinsel has been wrapped away in closets and the soft music gives place to the ordinary chant, these same members of the Altar Society will be at one another's throat. 'I don't care. She spread a story about me that I cannot forget. Actually, it's not what she said, but it's the principle of the thing! I can't forgive her!' It is strange how these ladies will bubble over with the feeling of charity at Christmas time, and will boil over with hatred two weeks

later. Strange, because the Child for whom they worked is one and the same God as the Christ who said: 'Love your enemies.'

"The junior in high school, who sings in the choir and the glee club, gets the Christmas spirit, too. She is a demon for activity just before school closes for the holy days. She takes it upon herself to wrap a present for her home-room teacher, and spends two hours shopping for the right kind of shaving lotion for the priest in the parish. This is good. But the home-room teacher and the priest in the parish would much rather have her avoid the occasions of sin that are so prevalent in her life.

"She meets the same young man every evening after school. They are 'steadies.' In the shadows of a drive-in theatre she carries on as though she never knew there was a Christ. In the darkness of the car she gives expression to her feelings with no holds barred. On Christmas night she will sing hymns about the dear little Infant, but a week later she won't listen to the grown-up Christ. 'If your right eye or your hand or your foot is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck it out, cut it off, for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than that your whole body should be thrown into hell.'"

There was a conclusion to what the young priest said, but it was of very little significance. He wished them a blessed and merry Christmas, and went back to finish the Mass.

On his way home at two o'clock that Christmas morning, the priest noticed the air was still brisk and cold, the stars were brittle in the skies. He tried to sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem." The words were there but not the tune. His heart was lighter

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now, lighter because he had had the chance of playing the role of the real Christ.

He himself felt a little more Christian, Catholic, a little closer to Christ. He knew his sermon would fall, for the most part, on stony ground. He knew that Christians, the old gent in a bad marriage, the huffy high school girl who knew all the answers, the

young married couples steeped in the heresy of birth-control, would still come to church on Christmas day because it seemed like the right thing to do. After that, they would go back to the same old ruts of convenience. They would follow the same cocky paths of morality they had hacked out for themselves. He knew they would not listen to his words. After all, they hadn't listened to Christ either. . . .

The Loneliest Children

Several years ago, an asphalt salesman named Dan Vinson decided that the loneliest people at Christmas time must be the children whose fathers are in prison. Since 1943, Mr. Vinson and some volunteer workers have sent out millions of Christmas toys each year which have been donated by businessmen everywhere.

The children have never heard of Mr. Vinson and that is the way he wants it to be. He believes that a child wants a present from someone he loves, so wardens and convicts are contacted, and the imprisoned father is sent a list of twenty-one toys. He checks the ones he wants, and volunteers package the selections and mail them to the prison where the father readdresses the package to his child.

Dan Vinson's favorite saying is: "A man never stands so straight as when he stoops to help a child."

Guideposts

Merry Christmas

To a New Convert to the Catholic Church

The long road and the hard road
You trod to find the manger,
No longer on His birthday is
Your King to you a stranger.

The dark ways, the crooked paths,
The world's confusing Babel,
You've left behind to kneel before
Your Saviour in a stable.

The fond prayer, the Christmas wish
To you need scarce be spoken:
Your bonds of grief, of doubt, of fear,
Forever have been broken.

D. F. M.



THOUGHTS for the SHUT-IN

Leonard F. Hyland

Christmas Gift to God

Christmas is a time for exchanging gifts. In that statement may be found the entire meaning of the feast so far as many people are concerned. To make use of an old saying, they have lost sight of the forest because of the trees. The essential meaning of the day has been lost sight of in the incidentals.

Why were gifts originally exchanged on this day? Because on Christmas we commemorate the greatest gift of God to man, Himself, clothed in human flesh and lying as a small infant in a manger. From the great charity of God towards man there arose the natural desire on the part of man to manifest in a special way his own charity and love, and hence this became the day of the giving of gifts.

Now obviously to leave God out of the picture is to make a travesty of the holy day. To bestow lavish gifts on relatives and friends, while never giving a thought to God, is to manifest a strange and perverted sense of the fitness of things.

Indeed the first gift of all on Christmas should be given to God. We don't mean the tinsel-bedecked item of department store merchandise. What God is interested in primarily is the gift of the human heart, with its full loyalty and love and spirit of obedience to His laws. Without that gift, all other gifts are insipid in His sight.

Now all that has been said leads up to this thought, pertinent to shut-ins. The sick and invalids are in a particularly advantageous position to present to God the one gift that really pleases Him. Their sickness and suffering have come to them not by their own will or desire, but by the permissive will of God. Hence they can, if they so desire, offer their hearts to Him without any admixture of selfishness.

According to Christ, many good works performed by men are spoiled by the factor of selfishness and pride. "In the day of your fast your own will was found." For the sick, such danger should be remote. They did not choose the cross they have to carry, so there should be little danger of their growing proud of their burden.

Let shut-ins then make a special effort at the Christmas season to practice patience and cheerful resignation to whatever pain and inconvenience their sickness imposes upon them. Let them offer these virtues as a Christmas gift to the Christ-child. Thus they will do their part to meet the appeal of the divine Infant, begging with arms outstretched for the love of the world.

Where You Can See Christ

An Examination of Conscience for the Christmas Season.

Donald F. Miller

ON THE first Christmas Christ appeared to the world as a little baby born of a virgin-mother in an abandoned stable outside the city of Bethlehem. The circumstances preceding His birth, i.e., the prophecies and marvels that foretold it, and the events that followed upon it, i.e., the miracles that He worked, the Gospel that He preached, the divine attributes of character that He manifested, proved that He was the Son of God, the long awaited Messiah, the Saviour needed by all the children of men.

Because of all this the world has come to see Christ in Christmas, to see Him in the cribs that are set up in churches, in homes, sometimes in parks and on busy streets. A little figure made of wood or plaster or stone, carved into the likeness of a beautiful child, is placed in a manger, but each believing Christian who sees it projects his mind beyond the figure to the reality it represents, which is Christ actually entering the world to save and transform lost mankind.

It is an earth-shaking thing—this fact of God's coming into the world in the form of a little baby. It was to have soul-shaking consequences for every human being as the life and mission of the Son of God made man unfolded. It was intended that Christ should remain before the eyes of men throughout their lives; that everything that they were to do should be in some way inspired and governed by what God said to His creatures when He became a man to teach them and

to save them.

If this purpose were to be fulfilled, it was necessary that Christ show Himself to men under various aspects, in a sufficient number of different guises to make Himself in some way present to them at all times. This He did. At Christmas when there is great joy in seeing Christ as a little baby in a manger, it is good for every Christian to ask himself whether he has learned to see Christ in the many other forms that He takes for the purpose of guiding souls toward heaven.

So the appropriate question to be asked at Christmas is this: "Where can I see Christ?" By the word "see" here we do not mean the kind of seeing that is confined to the eyes alone; we mean "see" in the sense of recognizing Christ in some form He chose to adopt before us in the world. In most cases the seeing actually means believing that Christ is before us, even though with our eyes we cannot see Him at all. Once reminded of where he can and should see Christ, the Christian will naturally go on to ask himself whether he has let himself become blind to many of the forms of Christ's presence that are constantly before him, and in consequence, disobedient and disloyal to the very Son of God.

This, then, will be an examination of conscience for all who want to make Christmas not merely an occasion for temporary and sentimental devotion, but one of lasting fruit and

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of real progress toward perfection.

1.

Do you see Christ in your neighbor?

Certainly Christ made it clear that He wants every one of His followers to see Him in some way in his neighbor. That is clear from the words He promised to speak to both the saved and the lost on judgment day. To the just He will say, after recounting the record of their charity toward their neighbor: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me." To the wicked He will say, after recalling how they refused help to the needy: "As long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me."

Of course, Christ is not personally and physically present in the people who cross your path or share your life each day. But He is in them through His love. He loves them and He wants them to be happy. You cannot love Christ without loving what He loves, without doing good to them for whom He did the greatest good by dying for their souls. Therefore He can rightly say: What you do to the least of my little ones, you do to Me. You don't love Me if you don't love all whom I love, including even sinners whom I desire to save.

Have you been conscious of this way of seeing Christ each day? Answer these questions.

Have you ever seen Christ in the ragged and unkempt beggar who asked you for an alms on the street? Or have you scorned and sneered at him? Have you given him a kind word and a prayer, even if you could not give him an alms?

Have you seen Christ in the unnamed and unknown orphans and old people and derelicts in whose behalf you were asked to give of the good

things God gave to you? Or did you leave them in their misery because you said they deserved their cruel fate?

Have you seen Christ, you who are white, in the colored people of your city, your neighborhood, your block? Or have you joined in boycotts and harassments against them, as if they were unloved by God and undeserving of your love?

Have you seen Christ in your wife when she irked and angered you, in your husband when he grieved you, in your children when they upset your peace and jangled your nerves? Or did you try to hurt them for bringing discomfort to you?

How easy you will find all the many-sided obligations of charity and patience with those around you, if you remember what Christ said: "Whatever you do to one of these my least brethren, you do to Me."

2.

Do you see Christ in His Church?

Christ wanted you to look on His Church as the extension of His own life, the great reality in the world that would continue His work for your soul, the one institution that would be protected by Him from ever leading you astray.

He talked about it as "my Church," as when He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." He identified your attitude toward His Church with your attitude toward Him, when He said to His first representatives in the Church: "He that hears you, hears Me; he that despises you, despises Me." He promised that you would always find Him in the Church when He promised that Church: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." He inspired St. Paul to describe the Church as His own mysti-

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cal body, with Himself the head and you the members united as intimately together as the parts of a human body.

It would be very foolish to think that Christ did not know when He founded His Church that it would always present to the world a two-fold aspect, the one of His divine presence, teaching, guiding, saving all who came to her, and the other of the human frailties of those through whom He would act. So indeed would it be foolish to take such scandal from the human beings in Christ's Church, both those in authority and those in subjection, that the presence of Christ in her could no longer be seen at all. Above all would it be disastrous to profess an allegiance to Christ and at the same time to withhold allegiance to the Church which, in important matters of faith and morals, He made His voice to the end of time.

Have you learned to see Christ in His one, holy, Catholic, apostolic Church? Answer these questions.

Have you accepted the official and authoritative teachings of the Church with the same perfect submission you would give to Christ speaking personally to you?

Have you concentrated so much attention on the faults or sins or human mistakes of the clergy that you lost sight of Christ working in and through His Church?

Have you refused to obey a serious law affirmed or made by the Church under the excuse that it was a man-made law, not one made by Christ?

Have you tried to bring your thinking on controversial subjects into general conformity with the thinking of the Church, even when there were no defined doctrines on the matter that

you were bound to believe?

How easy to see Christ in the world, speaking to you daily, when you remember His words to His Church: "He that hears you hears Me."

3.

Do you see Christ in the priest?

The name "other Christs" has traditionally been given to all priests ordained to minister to your spiritual needs. Through them, according to the will of Christ, you are born into new life in Him; you are fed His body and His blood; you are forgiven your sins; you are prepared for your tasks in life and made ready for your dying.

It would be blasphemous, of course, to think or say that every priest or any priest is as good or holy or wise as Christ. Priests are called to strive after the holiness of Christ. Some fail seriously in their striving; all fail in one way or another to reproduce the perfection of Christ. All have their own souls to save and can be lost even as you. Yet no matter what their faults they still represent Christ in baptizing, absolving, offering Christ's sacrifice, providing you with all the means that bring salvation to your soul.

Have you learned to see Christ in His priests, even in those marked and scarred with their human faults and sins? Answer these questions.

Have you given up the reception of the sacraments, on which your salvation depends, because a priest rebuked you, as you thought, unjustly, or let his anger hurt you, or neglected some of his duties?

Have you lessened the faith of others in the priesthood of Christ by gossiping about the faults and sins you saw or heard of in a priest?

Have you failed to do your duty in supporting your pastor and priests,

joining instead the chorus of voices that accuse all priests of being interested only in money?

Have you made it a habit to show your respect for the Christly character of the priesthood by the manner in which you greet priests on the street, in your home, wherever you meet them?

Have you ever prayed for priests, that Christ may more and more appear in them, and their human weaknesses more and more disappear?

How easy to see Christ and to think of Christ whenever you see or think of the priests whom He has empowered to bring Him to you.

4.

Do you see Christ in the Holy Eucharist?

Christ lived on earth only thirty-odd years. There can be no doubt that His first answer to everyone who ever wonderingly asks why He stayed so short a time is His abiding presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. He remains on earth to be seen and approached by all who accept His words as true, even when there is deep mystery in what He reveals.

He wants His followers to "see" Him on earth by faith in three wonderful ways. First, in the Mass, wherein He offers His sacrifice for their souls "from the rising to the setting of the sun," according to His words to His priests, "As often as you do this you shall show the death of the Lord until He come." Second, in Holy Communion, in which they not only "see" Him, but receive Him into their very bodies and souls, according to His words, "I am the Bread of life; I give you My flesh to eat and My blood to drink; he that eateth Me shall live by Me forever." Third, in His abiding presence in the tabernacle of every Catholic Church, in the form of that

bread of which He said, "This is My Body."

The life of the real Catholic centers about these three modes in which Christ remains present to him as if Christ in the Eucharist were a magnet and his soul a tiny piece of steel irresistibly drawn to it. Have you thus permitted yourself to see Christ near you and to be drawn to Him? Answer these questions.

Have you been looking upon the Mass as just a complicated religious ceremony, without consciousness of the tremendous fact that it brings Christ down upon the altar to re-enact His sacrifice for you?

Have you shown resentment by disobedience for the law the Church has made binding you to attend Sunday Mass, so that you will "see" Christ at least once each week?

Have you failed ever to attend week-day Mass, thus showing disinterest in finding Christ and being healed by His bruises?

Have you scorned the greatest privilege you possess, that of frequent and even daily Holy Communion? Do you receive Communion once or a few times a year, and the rest of the time let the nearness of Christ, the daily opportunity of personal union with Him, have no effect on your soul?

Have you been unmindful of the truth that you can visit with Christ at any hour of any day, in any Catholic Church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved? Do you pass by many churches many times, without stopping in for a word of prayer with Him Who made you, redeemed you, wants to help you reach heaven?

How easy to find Christ, to "see" Christ, to be close to Christ always, if only you have real faith in the Holy Eucharist!

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5.

Do you see Christ nailed to the cross at your hands whenever you offend Him by a deliberate sin?

This is the sad way of seeing Christ in the world, and yet it is very real. St. Paul revealed under inspiration that they who sin "crucify Christ to themselves again." This terrible truth brings Christ into the lives of His followers in two powerful ways. First, it makes them think of what it would mean to give in to a temptation, and thus is responsible for their rejecting many a proffered reward of sin. Second, it immediately awakens a deep, personal, sincere sorrow for sin whenever they fall.

It is of course true that Christ cannot actually be made to suffer His bitter passion and death again at the hands of each sinner who offends Him. But it is also true that Christ's passion and death were endured to show the malice of sin, the bad will of the sinner, the actual meaning in eternity of the sinner's rising up in rebellion against God. By a mortal sin, the sinner projects himself into the position of Judas and Annas and Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate and the executioners, and concurs with them all in putting Christ to death for his own gain.

This fact the widespread use of the

crucifix in Catholic life is meant to emphasize. The crucifix is a mere picture or representation, but the reality behind it is the fact that this is what the sinner is willing to do to Christ by his sins. Answer these questions.

Have you learned to look upon every temptation that ever assails you as an invitation to will Christ's death on the cross for yourself once more?

Have you become quickly aware, after a fall into sin, that you accepted the responsibility for Christ's death on the cross, and thus quickly aroused yourself to great sorrow for your sin?

Have you cultivated a great devotion to the passion of Christ, so that His sufferings for you have become a constantly increasing motive for resisting temptation and avoiding sin?

You can learn to see Christ on His cross at every turn in your life, for there will always be temptations to try you, and Christ will always be there pleading with you not to will His death once more.

See Christ, then, as He comes to you at Christmas as a little baby in the manger of a stable. But ask yourself at the same time whether you see Him every day, in the many forms in which He presents Himself for your love and service.

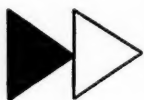
Merry Christmas

To a Sinner Just Forgiven

Doubly indebted, doubly redeemed are you
Who twice from state of death were born anew:
Once when the healing waters bathed your soul,
Now when absolving words have made you whole.

For this the God-man came, for this He died—
To win you mercy—mercy multiplied;
Oh, love Him now, forget not ever this:
Twice you've received His healing, saving kiss.

D. F. M.



POINTS of FRICTION

Louis G. Miller

Unruly Children

In this column the "No Children Wanted" ruling in many apartment blocks has previously been discussed. Landlords who put up this sign do not enlist our sympathy. That small children can create near havoc cannot be denied. But for a landlord personally to legislate against them anywhere on his premises indicates a selfish attitude toward life.

This month's column is concerned with the problem of friction which can arise in a neighborhood where small children are actually present in considerable numbers. Everyone knows the difficulties inherent in such a situation.

On the one side, complaints arise from property owners. Children are prone to ignore keep-off signs, and they blithely tramp over carefully kept lawns and gardens. Then also children seem by nature to generate incessant loud commotions, and occasionally they can be guilty of acts of thoughtless destruction or sheer vandalism.

On the other hand, parents are sometimes annoyed by the attitude of childless neighbors who, they contend, are downright fussy and unreasonable in their attitude toward the children. Let two blades of grass in their lawn be brushed against, and these children-haters fly into a rage and not only violently scold the children but pick a quarrel with the parents as well.

Then of course there is the allied problem of parents discriminating against the offspring of the family next door, and refusing to let their own children associate with them.

All of these explosive situations, of course, lead to increasing unpleasantness and unhappiness on all sides. Where does the solution of the problem lie?

It must be recognized that, following the original disobedience of our first parents, there is a downward drag to selfishness in our human nature. The only way to counteract that selfishness is by unceasing effort to cultivate patience and kindness and charity.

For the childless who are annoyed by children, this means accepting the irritation in good spirit.

For parents it means not being over-sensitive about their off-spring, and it means also training and disciplining them to respect the neighbors and their property. Let them be taught to be friendly toward all and to discriminate against none, except those, of course, who are quite clearly a bad influence upon them.

To follow such a course of conduct will cut down friction and must inevitably lead to greater harmony in a neighborhood.

Teen-Agers and Parties

Ernest F. Miller

A few of the rules that will help teen-agers to get the most fun and the least danger out of their parties.

THE teen-age subject most appropriate for discussion at this time is parties. December is the month of Christmas. And Christmas is the time for parties. Some of the parties held by and for teen-agers may be dangerous. If this be so, sensible teen-agers want the subject treated—what kind of parties are dangerous, why are they dangerous, what precautions can be taken against the danger, and so forth. They see no reason for being burned if such a calamity can be avoided. But they will be burned if somebody who knows all about it does not tell them when they get too close to the fire.

Of course, the subject of teen-age parties is always one of interest, whether the season be Christmas or vacation or any other time of the year. Thus, what is said in these lines should be considered applicable not only to such celebrations as are held during the holy time of our Lord's birth, but also to celebrations held at any other time. The advice is applicable to all times as long as a boy and a girl are

still in their teens, and as long as human nature is as it is—fallen, possessed of evil tendencies and full of the old devil who would like nothing better than to bring about its complete and irrevocable collapse, even though he has to do so by means of parties.

No grown person outside of the scrupulous and the puritanical ever says that parties under all circumstances should be forbidden to teen-agers, even mixed parties attended by both boys and girls. Parties are wonderful opportunities for fun and relaxation. And they give young people a chance to get acquainted with one another that is not offered on most other occasions.

Young people should get acquainted with one another. Boys and girls are the same insofar as their human nature is concerned. They have immortal souls, they have heaven for their final destiny, they must work out their salvation by a good and virtuous life, they have minds that can think, wills that can love, and bodies that can experience temptation. These facts are recognizable and should cause no bother here.

But in many less vital things boys and girls are entirely different. Boys as a rule like sports, mechanics, outdoor life. Girls are the contrary; they like fancy clothes that are fluffy and filmy, babies, mirrors and a solid and moderately comfortable home where they can put curtains on the windows and take great pains in arranging and rearranging the furniture. Boys go for work outside the home. Girls are generally enthralled by and attracted to work within the home.

Not only are there differences that are common to all boys in contradistinction to all girls, but there are also differences between girl and girl and between boy and boy.

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For example, some girls are red-headed, fiery in temperament and completely independent. Other girls are soft and serious and more than ordinarily easily given to tears. They can cry like a rain spout, and that, without warning and almost without cause. Nor can they stand without leaning on something, that something preferably and generally being a man. They may be blond and small and as fragile as a fairy. Still other girls are tall and strong and filled with nerve and muscle.

So through the whole category of girls, through the thousands and millions of girls that walk the earth. Each one differs from the other as star in the firmament of the sky differs from star, and as in heaven angel differs from angel. All girls are relatively beautiful; all girls are relatively good. But the beauty and the goodness of each girl is different from the beauty and the goodness of every other girl.

It is the same with boys. They too are as unlike (outside of the fundamental commonness that is the property of all human beings) as two branches on a tree. One is talkative, another is taciturn; one is forward and aggressive, another is retiring and shy; one is religious and responsible, another is little more than an animal, almost an atheist, definitely a sensualist and a weakling even though he talks loud and with much obscenity and profanity.

There is a real necessity for boys and girls to learn these differences in each other—not only the major differences between the sexes but the differences between members of the same sex, and to learn them gradually, if in the future they are to select wisely when they take unto themselves a husband or a wife.

The process of getting married should not be looked upon as a grab-bag—the bag is opened only a little bit, not enough for the grabber to see inside, but just enough for him to put in his hand and pull out a prize unknown and unseen. Rather it should be looked upon as something that has to be prepared for with study and thought and with the gathering of exact information.

It should be prepared for in part through the prudent association of the two sexes. That is where parties come into the picture. Parties can furnish a magnificent opportunity for boys and girls not only to get acquainted with one another but also for them to discover the differences that exist between boy and boy and girl and girl, that is, to learn of the immense variety that exists amongst girls and amongst boys.

It is very often at a party that a temperament will show itself most clearly. In the fun that is generated by the party, inhibitions will disappear, interior dispositions will be made manifest. The boys and girls will be as they really are. They will show themselves in their true colors.

If a girl is wise and observant at all, and she sees the boy who brought her to the party acting in such a way as does not appeal to her at all (he is loud and she does not like loudness—cannot stand it), even though the actions and the attitude of the boy are in no way evil, she will immediately cross such a type (not only the *individual* boy but the *type* of boy) off her list as a possibility for the future.

The boy may be handsome and popular and the catch of the season as far as the other girls are concerned. He may be a celebrated football player, and what could be more important

than that? But he is not for her. She discovers his ways of acting and of thinking at the party she attends. Perhaps she never would find out so much if the parties were not held because of an unbending prohibition on the part of elders.

So, parties can be a training ground for the future if they are conducted in the right way. Therefore, by no means should they be absolutely and unconditionally forbidden. *They should be controlled.* This is the conclusion of all people of reason. This is the conclusion of the Church.

First of all, there are certain kinds of parties that should be avoided by right-minded boys and girls no matter how much pressure is put on the youngsters to attend. The kissing party is a party of this kind. It has almost an infinity of variations. But all the variations come back to the same thing—games whose main purpose is to get the girls and the boys to exchange kisses either publicly or privately. Such games, of course, are generally played with much squealing and laughter and shouting, as though the whole thing were nothing more than an innocent joke, a harmless way of spending an evening and at the same time a means of providing a little fun.

The doctrine on the morality of kissing need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that anything that unnecessarily causes grave temptation in the mind and forbidden emotions in the body can be a serious sin. Prolonged and passionate kissing invariably is a mortal sin for both boy and girl. Casual kissing can be a danger. Generally the kissing involved in kissing games is casual. Still, games built on such "sport" should not be played by Catholic boys and girls. Nor should parents who are interested in the wel-

fare of the young allow kissing games to be played in their home.

The kind of party that has no chaperon, or that has a chaperon who is unconcerned with the demands of modesty, should be avoided. There are some young people who wait until their parents are absent so that they can have a party. And there are mothers and fathers who even abet such parties by their tacit permission.

Catholic boys and girls boycott parties of this kind, not because they are filled with foolish and unfounded fears, or because they consider themselves no more than children who need the protection of mother and father whenever they move out of the shadow of their home. They avoid the unchaperoned party because sometimes the ones who organize such are planning on fun that may not be in accord with the law of God. Grown people are forbidden to the party only because grown people can spoil the fun. And that is why grown people are not wanted.

It is in full accord with common sense that teen-age parties be supervised either directly or indirectly; that is, that they be supervised in this that even though older folks are not right on top of the party all the time, they are close enough at hand to see to it that at no time do things get out of hand. Boys and girls who are unwilling to submit to this rule are not to be trusted too far. And their invitations to parties should be thrown in the wastebasket.

Another kind of party that must be avoided is the one that has immoral practices as part of its program. Also any party that depends for its fun on drinking. There should be no drinking of liquor at teen-age parties.

There are some parties that need not be prohibited but that ought to

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be watched closely. Dancing parties, swimming parties, theatre parties, picnic parties. There is an element of danger in these gatherings. But the danger can be made remote by careful screening of those who attend the party and by a firm desire on the part of all concerned to do and to permit nothing that is wrong.

The goodness or the badness of a party will depend to a great extent on those who attend the parties. If *anybody* is allowed to come, there will be trouble. Invitations should be refused to those who have never learned self-control, and who are forever on the lookout for that which is suggestive and unclean. It is not demanded of young people that they be puritans. It is demanded of them that they be in no way a source of temptation to those around them. If they cannot measure up to this standard, they should be out.

When a party is in progress, it is imprudent for boys and girls to wander off in pairs to places where they can be alone as though they had no obligations to the group making up the party and to the host who organized the party, and as though they were incapable of being tempted and of doing wrong. It is to be feared that sometimes this practice is followed, and the results are bad.

Very possibly a good boy and a good girl can sit in a dark corner all by themselves and have no temptations

to bother them and lead them into sin. It is possible that the devil will be busy elsewhere when they put themselves in danger, so busy that he will have no time to suggest to them that they do wrong.

But there is just as strong a possibility that they cannot do this without experiencing the desire to express their affection for one another in a manner that is not entirely free from guilt. That is the way young people are built. And even good young people are not exempt from trouble if they put themselves in circumstances where trouble can be easily found.

It should not be expected that the same boy escort the same girl to all the parties that are held by a particular group of teen-agers. If that happens, the boys and girls are right back in the forbidden practice of regular courtships before they are old enough to carry on regular courtships. There should be an interchange of escorts. It is the purpose of the party to let *all* the boys get acquainted with *all* the girls and vice versa. This will not be done if there is too tight a rule about the same girl accompanying the same boy each time a party is held.

These are a few rules that should govern party-going. If they are followed, parties will help, not harm. And that is the wish of all people who have the welfare of teen-agers at heart; they want to help them, not hurt them.

Inseparables

You cannot, said Chesterton, visit the Child, without visiting the Mother; you cannot in common human life approach the child except through the mother. If we are to think of Christ in this aspect at all, the other idea follows as it is followed in history. We must either leave Christ out of Christmas, or Christmas out of Christ, or we must admit, if only as we admit it in an old picture, that those two holy heads are too near together for the haloes not to mingle and to cross.



readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Toledo, Ohio

"In response to the nursing Sister whose letter concerning breast-feeding of babies was published in Readers Retort, let me tell you my experience and that of my family. My mother had ten children, all spaced about two years or better apart except for two who were twenty-one months apart because she was not able to nurse the preceding children as long as usual on account of an infection. All the rest she nursed for about a year. My sister has nine children, all two years or more apart, and all of them she nursed for about a year. I myself have had fourteen children, all spaced two years or more apart, because I nursed all of them for up to a year after they were born. My last child was born when I was a grandmother forty-five years old, and even this child I was able to nurse, though our doctor thought I would not be able to. Thus my mother, my sister and myself, with thirty-three children, are practical proof of the fact that breast-feeding one's babies is a natural way of spacing them. The trouble is that most mothers today don't want to nurse their babies, and some give up because it is hard at first. If these would only struggle through the first month they would find it easy after that.

Mrs. M. M. L."

Certainly great weight must be attached to impressive figures of this kind, even though they involve only a few mothers.

The editors

Walnut Creek, Calif.

"I certainly agree with Sister M. C., who wrote in *THE LIGUORIAN* about breast-feed-

ing babies. When I had my first baby, the doctor allowed me to nurse it for only about six weeks. I became pregnant again a month after that. We moved then, and when my second baby came, the doctor I had did not believe in breast-feeding at all. Against his express wishes and even commands I fed the baby myself for three months. Two months later I was pregnant again. We again changed doctors, this time going to an older experienced man who recommended breast-feeding as the best possible thing for mother and child. Since then I have nursed five babies up to a year each, and all have been at least two years apart. Isn't it a little silly to bother with all the work of fixing a formula and sterilizing bottles when it can be avoided? Breast-feeding is better for both mother and child. I'm sure more would do it if they had a little encouragement.

Mrs. B. W."

We have had many complaints from mothers that their doctors discouraged and even forbade the breast-feeding of their babies. Perhaps some of the doctors who follow this policy have reasons that would be worth putting into print. We shall be glad to hear from them.

The editors

Baton Rouge, La.

"I am no doctor and have done no research on the matter brought up by Sr. M. C. in Readers Retort, but I can relate my own experience. I am the mother of seven children, all of whom I nursed for at least eight months. In each case it was a few months after I stopped nursing my babies

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before I became pregnant again, which spaced all our children about two years apart. My mother and mother-in-law had the same experience with all their children, and I have a few friends who tell me it has never failed. I feel that if more mothers would nurse their babies we would have much less of this crying about their fate of having a baby every year. Obviously God intended this natural method of spacing babies.

Mrs. J.P.D."

Cuyahaga Falls, Ohio

"THE LIGUORIAN proclaims itself as devoted to the unchangeable principles of truth, justice, democracy and religion. Just what degree of infallibility do these words imply? Can you guarantee that in THE LIGUORIAN there will never be opinions that are debatable, theoretical, or not in harmony with the teaching of other than Redemptorist priests? May I assume that all controversial topics are first adjudicated by supreme councils of the Church, so that no disagreement will arise among teaching orders of the Church? I am looking for a Catholic magazine that contains precise and infallible truth. Can you prove that THE LIGUORIAN is such a magazine? I recently heard that another religious order disagreed with your view of what work is forbidden on Sunday. I assume that such disagreements should never happen.

L. J. M."

No Catholic magazine can claim infallibility unless it publishes nothing but the text of officially defined doctrines of the Catholic Church. But any Catholic magazine that is published "with ecclesiastical approval" may be looked upon as a source of solid information about Catholic teaching, and of tenable opinions on matters open to controversy. There are many subjects on which a variance of opinions may be found among different editors, especially when it comes to the practical application of principles in individual cases. No Cath-

olic should take scandal at such variance, but should try to form his own opinion on the basis of the best arguments put forth on either side.

The editors

Wilmington, Dela.

"I do not wish to renew my subscription to THE LIGUORIAN. I found your discussion of the Y.M.C.A. anything but worthwhile.

M.H. McC."

It is our hope to inspire our readers with the idea that all discussions are worthwhile, whether they agree or disagree with a personal viewpoint or opinion. Knowledge of the truth comes from looking at both sides of a controverted question.

The editors

Santa Barbara, Calif.

"I would like to know whether the title 'For Wives and Husbands Only,' means that it would be wrong for the unmarried or those not concerned with advising the married to read the articles that appear under that heading. . . . I can think of no way in which THE LIGUORIAN could be improved on except that it might be made bigger or be published more often. Thank you.

L.C.H."

Any normal person who may at some time enter marriage, or may have occasion to answer questions or give advice concerning problems of marriage, may read the articles that appear for husbands and wives. Scrupulous persons, i.e., those who are greatly troubled by thoughts about marriage, and those who have renounced marriage and are in a state of life in which they will scarcely ever have to concern themselves about the problems of the married, are advised not to read them.

The editors

Toledo, Ohio

"Please cancel my subscription because I do not believe in some of your ideas. I cannot agree with the teaching that chil-

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dren should be brought into the world to suffer the horrible conditions that exist in some families. I love children and if I had money would do everything in my power to help those in need but there is a limit to everything. Also, I do not believe in colored persons marrying whites. God made birds of different kinds but they were not made to inter-mix. I have nothing against the colored race, and I send money to colored missions. But I don't believe a white person should ever marry a colored person. I'm sure you will never find a robin living with a blackbird. The money I would have sent for THE LIGUORIAN will be given to a mission, where I am sure it will do much more good.

Mrs. F. McP."

Stating, as we must, that practices of birth-prevention are always sinful does not mean that we recommend that married people have children under any circumstances, no matter how miserable the prospect of caring for them. If this former reader means that the poor should use birth-prevention to avoid a family, she is no longer Catholic in outlook, no matter how much she gives to missions. Contraception is always wrong; not spacing children through self-control and abstinence. . . . Also, stating the undeniable truth that there is no natural, divine or ecclesiastical law forbidding inter-racial marriage does not constitute a campaign in behalf of such marriages. All students of racial problems know that, in general, Negroes want to marry Negroes and white people whites. The exceptional cases are still not immoral, and they are nobody's business but the person's involved.

The editors

Minneapolis, Minn.

"We are two girls of sixteen and seventeen. We receive THE LIGUORIAN, and we thoroughly disagree with your attitude on inter-racial marriage. Have you ever stopped to think of how the children of such a marriage suffer? The couple that marry

may have two colored babies and one white, or vice versa. Or maybe they would have all white, then one or two generations later a colored baby appears. This makes them total outcasts. This letter will probably be thrown in the trash-can, but I am sure that this is an important point. We are not prejudiced, but we believe there should be no inter-racial marriage allowed.

G.L. and M.F."

Don't you see, girls, that unconsciously you are assuming that a dark skin is a disgrace, and it is this thought that makes you see such a tragedy in a couple having some white and some colored babies. Here are three things to remember. 1) In general, it is a well-known fact that colored people want to marry colored people, and white people want to marry whites. 2) But there is no law against an exception to this general rule and circumstances could easily arise in certain parts of the world in which a white person's only chance of marriage would be a colored person. Would you say that in such a case both would have to remain celibate rather than marry? 3) If a colored person and a white person love each other enough to marry, they are going to love all their children equally, no matter what their color may be. In short, once you get over thinking of dark color as a disgrace, you don't think in terms of skin color any more, but only of the human beings involved.

The editors

Mobile, Ala.

"Please stop sending your sexy magazine to us. For a Church — any Church — to allow such stuff to be sent to even elderly parishioners is preposterous.

Mrs. W.L.S., Jr."

Buffalo, N.Y.

"It can be difficult, once one is out of school, (as I have been for over ten years) to replace the strong guiding influence of Catholic education. But not so at all with

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THE LIGUORIAN at hand. I could write a book about the invaluable assistance it has been for me in raising my family with a truly Catholic outlook. It is always my consolation and my inspiration, in the very literal sense of both these words. Don't ever give up your tremendous fight for souls. To borrow someone else's phrase, you may lose a battle here and there, but you will surely win the war.

Mrs. E.F."

Wright-Patterson, AFB, Ohio

"This letter is three years overdue. I had never heard of THE LIGUORIAN till around Christmas of 1951, when, while I was at home on leave, I heard a priest speak of it at Sunday Mass. I subscribed, but it was with the feeling that I was making a donation and that the magazine was merely meant as an inducement for donations. How wrong I was. The return I have realized from my subscription is out of all proportion to the cost. It would be cheap at five times its cost. Before receiving it I knew practically nothing about my religion except that I was a Catholic. Being a Catholic merely meant going to Church on Sunday and receiving Communion during the Easter season. I was a lukewarm Catholic, and even that may be a higher rating than I deserved. But since receiving my first copy of THE LIGUORIAN I have read every issue from cover to cover, and I have found that every article applied directly or indirectly to me. Through THE LIGUORIAN, the works of St. Alphonsus, and the grace of God, I believe and hope I am now on the right road with sufficient strength to reach my journey's end. My sincerest thanks to the Redemptorist Fathers for helping me to see where I was wandering and pointing out the right direction.

C.P.C., 1st Lt., USAF."

Glendale, N.Y.

"I am one of those terrible teen-aged boys that the newspapers talk about, but I know a good thing when I see it, and your maga-

zine is tops. I went to public school and received very little religious instruction. Through your magazine I became instructed and now understand Catholic doctrine much better. I like THE LIGUORIAN for many reasons. It has no commercials or cheap fiction to gum up the works. You write straight from the shoulder without pulling a single punch — and I haven't seen that in any other periodical. Don't listen to the people who tell you to tone down your magazine. If you do, you will join the ranks of the run-of-the-mill publications. Right now you have a great magazine. Keep it that way.

R.B."

We are especially grateful to the large number of teen-agers who have written to us, most of them in terms like the above, in recent months. We shall keep on writing about their problems.

The editors

E. Springfield, Penna.

"I have never written to an editor before, but I must tell you how much I enjoy your magazine. Don't change it. I have a small baby and not much extra time for reading, but always read THE LIGUORIAN from cover to cover and have never found an article that I did not enjoy, and that did not help me to appreciate my faith more. It will be a 'must' for my children when they are growing up.

Mrs. A.P."

Springfield, Ohio

"I did not know, when I subscribed to THE LIGUORIAN, what a low mentality magazine it was. It is full of bigotry and sex discussions. I read *Time*, *Readers' Digest*, and our diocesan weekly, but I refuse to read THE LIGUORIAN. Don't send me any more copies.

Mrs. T.L.B."

N.N.

"A reader in the September issue asks, 'Is there no end to your discussions of sex?'

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Well, I am married for eighteen years, and I have learned more from *THE LIGUORIAN* than I ever learned before and I am deeply grateful for the helpful information. I was never told anything by my parents as a child in Europe, and I know that there are many other mothers like myself. I don't intend to raise my children in the same ignorance in which I was brought up. Please continue to help us to know what is right and wrong. Please withhold my city and name from publication.

Anon."

Camp Hale, Colo.

"*THE LIGUORIAN* is a great magazine and I especially was grateful for some of the articles printed on timely topics. In the service one is bound to get into religious discussions, and it was due many times to such articles in *THE LIGUORIAN* that I was able to give an intelligent answer (the whys and wherefores of our religion) to the people with whom the discussion was pursued. It is quite surprising to me how so many so-called Catholics get worked up about some of the issues discussed in *THE LIGUORIAN*, such as racial prejudice, etc., so much so that they go so far as to cancel their subscriptions. I believe that a good cure for these prejudices would be for such people to be the co-worker with a Negro, such as we are in the services. Of course some are so stubborn about this issue that they would probably be blinded with hatred etc., in spite of the facts. But I believe that being together with the colored in the service has helped many of our young men to see the truth. Thank you again for your past generosity and keep up the good work.

Pvt. E.A.K."

Dallas, Texas

"Everything I have to say, you've heard time and again from many of your grateful readers, but I simply cannot resist the urge to thank you personally for such a splendid example of Christian journalism.

Believe it or not, here's one southerner who says you're 'on the beam' when it comes to the racial question. There can never be any harmony among the races until folks realize that the only factors which are truly important are the soul and the intellect. We Texans, I believe, treat our colored neighbors better than the rest of the deep south, but this surely isn't saying much. Keep up the editorials, for if Christ's wishes are to be satisfied, 'Jim Crowism' must vanish from the American scene. I pray that your wonderful periodical will become better known with each passing month.

P.M."

San Francisco, Calif.

"I want to compliment you . . . *THE LIGUORIAN* is the most practical Catholic magazine on the market. I am a secondary school teacher and find it of great assistance in helping me to teach religion. I cannot understand how people are able to write such harsh letters criticizing the contents of the magazine. All members of your staff are obviously well-versed in the ways of the world through your missionary contacts. Please continue your present policy and let people know that sin is sin.

Bro. C."

Little Rock, Ark.

"I first became acquainted with *THE LIGUORIAN* through my mother, who received it for a number of years. When I used to go home for a visit, I read every copy I had not seen since my previous visit. It is exactly what I need to have a better understanding of my faith. In some of your recent issues were articles dealing with problems I myself was facing, and one was completely solved through your wonderful magazine. I have two teen-aged daughters, and I want them to read it too, because it treats of problems for all ages. Enclosed is my subscription.

Mrs. R. D."

The First and Last Battle

The great poet Chesterton reached into the distant past to describe the future, when he wrote the *Ballad of the White Horse*. It is a masterpiece too little known and read.

John E. Doherty

THE gift of prophecy seems rarer now than in ancient days, yet the Church in very recent years has lost three contemporaries who were prophets of the first rank. These were Paul Claudel in France, and in England, Hilaire Belloc and Gilbert Keith Chesterton.

St. Paul describes prophecy in the early Church as a powerful gift bestowed on some of its members to express a vision of the faith with great force and clarity, as well as to see into the future. But even if we should restrict prophecy to the foretelling of future events, each of these writers had the gift in a unique way. Each foretold the coming conflict of the faith with the forces of modern paganism. Each with marvellous accuracy described the sadness and despair that would settle on contemporary society as it embraced paganism anew, in contrast to the perennial joy of the Catholic faith. Few will deny the superiority of their talents, even though some attempt to dismiss them as mere propagandists for the faith. In the writings of all three, one work stands out as a masterpiece in illustration of the thesis for undying Christian hope. It is Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse*.

How do we dare to bestow such

praise on a comparatively unknown poem? It is true that the *Ballad* seldom appears in any anthology, for it is a long, narrative poem, vigorous in its affirmation of Catholic ideals, and this immediately seals its doom in some critical quarters. Nevertheless, quotations from the poem often highlight contemporary historical events, and the quoted lines have an amazing quality of prophecy. Those who then turn to the poem itself are invariably intoxicated with their discovery.

Such an occasion was the darkest hour of the last world war. In the early days of the war, the German juggernaut was sweeping across Europe, and each day brought news of a new disaster and defeat of the allies. Soon, it was apparent, only a tiny ribbon of water, the English channel, would separate the militant forces of pagan Nazism from the last bulwark of Christianity in western Europe. Then came the morning when the island of Crete fell, and the London *Times* broke the story under the oddest headlines in newspaper history:

"I tell you naught for your comfort,
Yea, naught for your desire,
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher.
Night shall be thrice night over you

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And heaven an iron cope.
Do you have joy without a cause,
Yea, faith without a hope?"

These verses were from the *Ballad of the White Horse*. They were strangely appropriate to this blackest hour of the war, and soon British soldiers would be murmuring them in their foxholes, as the sky indeed became an iron cope with planes and bombs and guided missiles.

Yet this was also the hour when young men all over the world would find a cause to fight for. Up to this time there was universal misgiving and doubt as to the reason for the war and its purpose. Now the issue revealed itself to many in all its simplicity as a fight to preserve the values of the Christian faith. Young men who had never heard of Chesterton or his *Ballad* cast aside their indifference and entered into battle joyously, and many of these died gloriously on the field.

"Do you have joy without a cause, yea faith without a hope?" These words are the theme of Chesterton's poem as in contrast to the despair of the pagan. The Christian journeys through life to an ultimate victory or defeat that lies beyond death. In his effort to win that ultimate victory, each day brings its new trial, suspense and adventure, but beyond it all, beyond even temporal defeat, lies final joy.

The pagan on the other hand lives in a world without faith, and hence without joy. In his world there is no real sanction for good nor punishment for evil. When his bodily senses are sated with pleasure, there is nothing left but disillusionment with life and dark pessimism.

"Do you have joy without a cause?" In Chesterton's poem, these words are uttered by the Blessed Virgin, the

queen of victories. Those who read them in the *London Times* on the fateful morning of Crete's fall, if they recalled the poem at all, more probably remembered that they were spoken to King Alfred the Great. It was almost inevitable that Chesterton should have centered his vision of the faith around this great ninth century English king, for Alfred was at once a warrior, a lawgiver, a scholar, and a saint, the most Catholic and Christ-like of all the kings of England. He ruled that land when it was settled in its Catholic faith, and it was he as its ruler who bore the brunt of the pagan hordes who came from the continent and overran England in his time.

It is at this point of low ebb in Alfred's fortunes that Chesterton begins his poem. Hiding with his tattered and defeated forces, the king is sorely tempted to give up the fight. In this crisis, our Lady appears to him. But when Alfred begs for consolation and assurance of final victory, she is silent. It is not for the Christian to know the outcome of his life's battle before he has achieved it by his own valor. Pagans may live that way, superstitiously consulting what they regard as their predetermined fates.

"But you and all the kind of Christ
Are ignorant and brave,
And you have wars you hardly win
And souls you hardly save.
I tell you naught for your comfort,
Yea naught for your desire,
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher.
Night shall be thrice night over you
And heaven an iron cope,
Do you have joy without a cause,
Yea, faith without a hope?"

Her words, which seem comfortless, stimulate Alfred with great hope. Our

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blessed Lady's appearance has awakened in him all the ideals, heroism and chivalry of the faith. He knows now he is not fighting in vain, for though hope of victory may be dim on earth, still he is fighting for Christ, for the faith and for her. With a song on his lips he regroups his forces:

"Out of the mouth of the Mother of God
Like a little word come I:
For I go gathering Christian men
From sunken paving and ford and fen,
To die in a battle God knows when,
By God, but I know why."

Contrasting scenes are then beautifully painted. The camp of the confident, boasting Danish invaders, vaunting of how they would hunt the Christians like "hares on the mountain height," and the Christian camp where,

"Though strange joys had grown in the
night,
Despair grew with the day."

At dawn the battle is locked, and its course follows the grim logic of war. For what is valor against overwhelming strength? Each of Alfred's leaders is cut down till the king stands alone, and retreats with the remnant of his fighting men to make ready for one last charge. Better to die fighting, he tells his men, than to live as slaves, but, as the soldiers wearily lift their broken shields and hopeless lances, at that moment the king looks up and sees our Lady once more:

"For our Lady stood on the standards
rent,
As lonely and as innocent
As when between white walls she went
And the lilies of Nazareth.
One instant in a still light

He saw our Lady then,
Her dress was soft as western sky,
And she was a queen most womanly —
But she was a queen of men."

In this vision Alfred found a new strength that was superhuman, and miraculously was able to transmit it to his tired warriors. Through the vale of the white horse they triumphantly pushed the pagans before them, on and over the heights and into the sea whence they had come.

Completely victorious, Alfred gathers up his fighting men and gives thanks to our Lady. Then he speeds his valiant comrades to their own homes, but for himself, he is content to return to his castle in a small corner of England, praying that he may govern even this corner well and keep it from conquest. For the king knows that the pagans will be back with fiercer and even larger detachments, and that, while men live, the battle will never be completely won.

But it is to the future especially that he looks, and before he dies, he makes this paradoxical prophecy:

"And though they scatter and though
they go,
In some far century, sad and slow,
I have a vision and I know
The heathen shall return.
They shall not come with warships,
They shall not waste with brands
But books be all their eating
And ink be on their hands.
They shall come mild as monkish clerks,
With many a scroll and pen;
And backward ye shall turn and gaze
Desiring one of Alfred's days,
When pagans still were men . . .
What though they come with scroll and
pen
As grave as a shaven clerk,
By this sign shall you know them

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That they ruin and make dark . . .
By God and man dishonored,
By death and life made vain,
Know ye the old barbarian,
The barbarian come again . . . "

Who is the barbarian come again? To those familiar with Chesterton's writings, it is plain that he referred to the army of propagandists now engaged in a death struggle with the Church within the very gates of Christendom. At first sight they may seem to have little in common with the ancient savages who brought night and the dark ages upon the Christian world in Alfred's time. These are men of scientific and intellectual bent; they are not warriors, and have no fierce loyalty to anything. They are the "mild and monkish men" in Alfred's words: professors, artists, dramatists, novelists, essayists, philosophers, etc., who are characteristically pagan. They studiously ignore and condemn the divine revelation given through Jesus Christ and the Church, and they have instead their own gods of complexity, scepticism, weakness and nothingness.

Their works are full of self-conscious insults to beauty and right living, and taken together, they are a coordinated and organized affirmation of the repulsive and vile in defiance of traditional Christian values. Under specious names they seek to bring back the pagan and barbaric practices of free love, polygamy, abortion and unnatural vice, whose end is the ruin of the Christian family and the ideal of marriage. This is the onslaught of paganism so clearly foretold by Belloc and Claudel as well as Chesterton, and it is of these modern barbarians that Alfred speaks when he says: "By this sign shall you know them, that they ruin and make dark."

"Hail the undying heathen," cried Alfred, "who is sadder than the sea." It would be folly for any Christian to underestimate the power of paganism's advance. Its assault from within the fortress of Christianity, by men with Christian names, is slow, for it proceeds by attrition. Yet beyond the gates the battle line is drawn of a far more ferocious foe: the militant atheists in Russia and China and the East. The sadness and bitterness and fear in their world are testified by every scarecrow of a refugee who creeps over the line into freedom.

And though, by human judgment, the enemy seems very strong, within and without, nevertheless those who live in the true faith of King Alfred remain buoyant with joy and seemingly unreasonable hope. This confidence is marvellously stimulated by a spreading and deepening devotion to the Mother of Christ.

As in Chesterton's poem, Our Lady appeared to King Alfred to assure him of her help, and strengthen his courage and faith, so also she has appeared in our modern time of trial. At Fatima in Portugal in the year 1917 she gave to the Christian world a message remarkably like that other message long ago:

"I tell you naught for your comfort,
Yea naught for your desire
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher."

At the same time she gave assurance that when she inspires all hearts to commit themselves to Christ's cause as hers is committed, she will surely conquer. From this stems the utter conviction of Catholics that the power of this one human being who perfectly pleased God is more potent than paganism and all the forces of

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evil.

The story of King Alfred and Our Lady in the *Ballad of the White Horse* may serve to illuminate the force of this conviction to many who find it difficult to accept. As for true and convinced Catholics, their hearts will glow with love for her to whom Chesterton dedicates his masterpiece. To her he cries:

"Your face that is a wandering home,
A flying home for me . . .
Across these days like deserts, when
Pride and a little scratching pen
Have dried and split the hearts of men,
Heart of the heroes, ride.
Up through an empty house of stars,
Being what heart you are,
Up the inhuman steep of grace,
Carrying the firelight on your face
Beyond the loneliest star."

Not For The Soft

Christmas is no time for mere sentimentality. It is the time for the first meeting of the Word made flesh. We are to live our lives in Christ and it is no Christmas card existence even in its beginning. It is the first step on the way of the cross, and God in infinite mercy has cloaked our meeting with it in a wedding of solemnity and unbounded joy.

Children can cut through the sentimentality of it with their stunning child logic.

"Jesus was born in a barn, dear, with only Mary, Joseph, the ox and the ass to welcome Him."

"But mother — barns are so smelly."

We are apt to forget that the cave that stabled the ox and the ass was not a garden of delight. No fountains of cologne cascaded at the entrance, even though some colognes are now called "Christmas Night."

"Christmas is the birthday of the little Lord Jesus, dear."

"Then shouldn't He have a present?"

If we had our wits about us the whole gigantic effort would shudder to a stop right there, for if there is no gift for Christ there is no sense in giving to others. Christmas is for Christ. The final filip, the cherry on top of the whipped cream that is on top of the Devil's confection of Christmas is the notion that Christmas is for man. *Christ is for man, but Christmas is for Christ.*

The Grail

Not Exactly True

This is the feast
Of the politic lie:
That gift auntie holds
Hurts your aesthetic eye
Yet you cry with feigned joy:
"What a beautiful tie!"

Yes, my friend, you must yet
Perhaps twice guilty plead
If you add the remark:
"Why it's just what I need!"

LGM

No Sense of Humor at All

Louis G. Miller

Longrest Hospital
Middledale, Ohio
November 15, 1955

Grusome Brothers Novelty Co.
9319 Standish
Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen:

Several weeks ago I ordered some of the items advertised in your catalogue. They arrived in good condition, and I made use of them according to the directions.

Doubtless it will be of interest to you to receive a testimonial in regard to your products. I am enjoying an enforced leisure at the present time, and thought I would apply myself to same in such a way as to prove satisfactory.

The items I ordered and received from you were the following. I list them according to the catalogue number and description for the sake of clarity. After listing each one, I will add a few words of comment.

"No. 5551. Crazy golf ball. A great gag."

I tried this item on my brother-in-law, a man who, although singularly lacking in talent in other departments of life, is an avid and proficient golfer. Nothing delights him more than to conquer me on the links, which, I must confess, he quite regularly does. I bided my time, and waited until a

match in which, by good fortune on my part, we were all even coming into the eighteenth hole. We matched strokes up to the green, and all hinged upon a putt of some 12 feet, which my brother-in-law had to sink to win the hole and match.

At this crucial point I was able furtively to substitute your "crazy ball" for his. The result was electrifying. He carefully lined up his putt, and stroked it, but the ball rolled in an erratic zig-zag line, and missed the hole by a good five feet.

I must report that my brother-in-law proved to be very obtuse in grasping the humor of the situation. In fact, having examined the ball and understood my ruse, he flew into a rage, and bent his putter into the shape of a pretzel. I feel confident he would have wrapped it around my neck, had I not taken the precaution of retreating behind a water hazard.

"No. 5441. Black eye joke. Trying to focus a small telescope, the viewer receives a black eye. A good ice-breaker for parties."

Unfortunately, and against my better judgment, it was my mother-in-law who first made use of this gadget. We were at a party, and I had produced it intending to offer it to a friend. My mother-in-law seized it from my hands and put it to her eye before I could

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stop her. Half an hour later, when she happened to glance in a mirror, and understood why people were tittering at her, she proved conclusively that she is totally lacking in a sense of humor. You say in your advertisement that this item is a good ice-breaker. I must report that in my case, this is true only in the sense that my mother-in-law poured a pitcher of ice-cubes and ice water over my head.

"No. 4564. Worm. Great surprise when it shows up in a sandwich."

This is certainly the truth. The surprise in my case was rather unpleasant, however, because my wife hasn't spoken to me since I used this item at a luncheon in our home of the North End Ladies' Cultural Circle. To make matters worse, I had previously prepared, and had no time to withdraw, your item No. 4564. This, you will recall, is the 30-inch snake which leaps out of a can of mixed nuts. I am afraid it must be said that the ladies of the Cultural Circle did not appreciate the joke as I had thought they would. In fact, they departed the premises in a state of some agitation. I walked outside with them, trying to pacify them, but when I came back, I found the front door locked against me, and no amount of pleading could gain readmittance.

I decided in the circumstances the best thing would be to move in for a time with my sister. This sister is married to the avid golfer upon whom I had played a previous trick as described before. It was my hope that he would be willing to let bygones be bygones, and in a spirit of good fun,

I had with me a supply of your exploding cigars (No. 4760) and your stinko cigarettes (No. 4732). I found it impossible to use these items, because of the intense suspicion with which I was regarded. I began to realize that the time for jokes in my own family circle was past.

Unfortunately, fate entered the picture at this point. The small son of my sister and brother-in-law discovered a box of your item No. 4278 on my dresser. This item is your itching powder, which you describe as "a practical and harmless joke. Causes incessant scratching."

My brother-in-law had invited the boss and his wife to a meal in his home. I was present at the occasion, but was entirely innocent of the blame for what followed. The boy (a rather distasteful replica of his father) had scattered the powder around the room and surreptitiously blown it into the air.

Well, I will not attempt to describe all that happened except to say that after the boss and his wife had hurriedly departed, and a confession had been extracted from the culprit, my my brother-in-law unfairly and unjustly vented his rage upon me. I must regretfully confess that he proceeded to throw me bodily down a flight of steps, at which time I cracked my clavicle and badly sprained my ankle.

That is why I am writing this from a hospital. My wife is still angry at me. My sister won't speak to me. My friends mistrust me. My final word to you, gentlemen, is drop dead!

Sincerely Yours.

"A woman says she's been shopping when she hasn't bought anything for the same reason that a man says that he's been fishing when he hasn't caught anything."

Mutual Moments

Happenings in Rome

Monthly round-up of significant events in the capital of Christendom.

Christopher McEnniry

Pope to Geneva Conference:

In these busy days we have no end of solemn meetings of the "Powers." Unfortunately they do not always bring more happiness and peace to the human beings governed by the "Powers." Hence it was encouraging to hear at the Geneva international meeting for peace-time use of atomic force the voice of one who has nothing to seek but happiness and peace for human beings. To this meeting was admitted a diplomatic representation from the Holy See. Doctor Medi, head of the delegation, spoke at the close of the meeting.

"As representative," he said, "in this conference of a spiritual Power that never ceases to urge all and everyone to put at the disposition of all peoples, through the most complete and reciprocal cooperation, the gifts given to man by the Creator, this delegation most heartily subscribes to the action of this conference in taking up the consideration of means for putting at the disposition of all the benefits of nuclear force.

"The preoccupation of this conference to find the truth and to share generously their findings, and above all their conviction that every discovery in this matter belongs to the whole human race and should be utilized for the benefit of the whole human race, — these are the conditions that will assure the success of this conference, and these are the conditions necessary to bring about international cooperation in developing atomic force for peace-time uses.

"Naturally this conference has not

been able to treat this question in its totality. It is necessary to examine more minutely and on the spot social and economic factors in order to assure a just distribution of these riches, in particular to aid peoples in regions poor and deprived of natural resources. Necessary also is it to move with prudence in order not to cause a violent upset hurtful to the dignity of the human person. All this will be accomplished surely and only by restraining selfish interests and by cooperating in a spirit of brotherly love.

"Having said this, my delegation congratulates this conference on the noble beginning it has made, and calls to its attention the words of the Supreme Pontiff, spoken sixteen months ago: 'And so We exhort all men of science and of good will to persevere, full of ardor and hope, in theoretical and experimental studies, in order eventually to put cheap and abundant power at the disposition of peoples living in poverty and misery.'"

The Pope on Roses:

The prize-winners in the international contest of rose-fanciers came to Rome to receive their honors. The Pope admitted them to an audience and said:

"We would that We had the soul and the genius of St. Francis of Assisi to discourse worthily on your beautiful profession, thus leading you to pass, as he did, from earth to heaven, from the contemplation of the creature to the love of the Creator. The Bible says God placed Adam in the garden of Eden to tend and cultivate it. From

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that day to this man has tended God's great garden, which is this earth — not only tended it, but even improved it, for such is the tender solicitude of our Father in heaven that He invites His children into this intimate collaboration. And is this not your privilege, gentlemen, you who strive continually to produce new varieties of roses, new forms and new coloring?

" . . . The red rose has become, from the earliest centuries, symbol of the blood-martyrs, just as the white lily is that of the pure virgins. On the feast of the Holy Innocents the Church sings to them in that matchless hymn: Hail, flowers of martyrs, Hail, budding roses torn off by the tempest!

"The rose is found on the most ancient tapestries and priestly vestments; it flames in cathedral windows; it speaks everywhere of Christian joy, it has become the cherished emblem of Mary, Cause of our Joy. The rosary represents, first, a garden of roses dedicated to Mary, then a decoration for her image, then a symbol of her charms. Mary is compared to a rose; in the litany we plead: Mystical Rose — Queen of the Rosary, pray for us. . . . When she appeared to Bernadette, on each foot she wore a rose. The liturgical development of the rose as a symbol of Mary should surprise nobody; instinctively we choose the most beautiful of flowers to offer to the most beautiful of creatures. This spontaneous linking of the rose with Mary is repeated in countless pious customs practiced in her honor by her clients, the most lowly as well as the most learned; and how often spiritual writers return to this theme and develop its mystical meaning. . . ."

Great Teacher Beatified:

That model educator, Father Marcelline Champagnat, has now been

raised by the Vicar of Christ to the honors of the Altar. Henceforth he is "Blessed" Marcelline. He stood amid the ruins left in the path of the "Reign of Terror," gathered about him a group of young men of zeal, courage and self-sacrifice, trained them to teach and sent them out into the whole world. Our goal, he cried, is a Catholic school in every parish in the world.

Nothing narrow, restricted, petty for this great educator. Educate for eternity: from that true education comes every good — for man, society, religion — as surely as the water from the spring, the oak from the acorn. 'Twas no smooth and easy road he mapped out for his teaching brothers. How will you reach your pupils? By wearing yourself out for them, loving them all without any exception, the rich and the poor, the bright and the dull, forming them for what is best, morally, intellectually, religiously. Be deeply convinced of the importance and nobility of your profession. See Christ in your pupils, treat them with kindness and gentleness, be always even-tempered and self-controlled, always cheerful and jovial. . . .

In the decree of beatification the Pope recalls the apparently insignificant incident that spurred him to inaugurate his glorious work.

As a young priest, Father Champagnat hastened to the bedside of a dying boy, son of a so-called Catholic family. The priest was shocked to find that the poor neglected child knew nothing of Jesus Christ and the sacred truths He had come to teach. Father Champagnat tried to teach him what was absolutely necessary in order to receive the sacraments of penance, Holy Eucharist and extreme unction, and prayed with him until he died.

This sad experience lay heavy on the heart of this devoted priest. He set

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to work at once to do something about it. He founded the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary to teach the faith to poor children. The society has spread throughout the world. Following the instructions and guidance of Blessed Father Champagnat, the Little Brothers have saved hundreds of thousands from living and dying in ignorance like that poor boy.

Traitors to Catholic Poland:

In baptism one receives the gift of faith, and with that gift the grace to hold fast to the faith and the strength to put it into practice in daily life. Just a thousand years ago next year Poland was baptized. For a thousand years Poland has held fast to that faith. For a thousand years Poland put that faith into practice in daily life. What a glorious history! Little wonder that the devil is enraged and that he has stirred up so many and such varied persecu-

tions against faithful Poland.

One of the most insidious of these diabolical attacks is raging today. While Cardinal Wyszynski and other legitimate pastors of the flock are held in jail and Communist censorship strangles every voice that would be raised to tell the people the truth, a clique of so-called "progressive Catholics" edit books, pamphlets, newspapers telling the Poles that they may become Communists without ceasing to be good Catholics, that Catholicism and Communism can and should work in harmony for the welfare of the nation.

Because simple souls were being deceived it became necessary for the Pope to condemn by a special decree a book by Piasecki, "*Fundamental Problems*," and a weekly newspaper, "*Dzis i Jutro*." Both publications are placed on the list of forbidden books.

An Assist For Television

Last Christmas, an American in Wisconsin named Herman Weiker, father of eleven children of whom the eldest was sixteen, saw Midnight Mass on television. After it he said to his wife:

"For some time past I have been thinking that there is something wrong with us. Now I know what it is; we have been living too long without religion." Next day he spoke to a Catholic neighbor and asked him if he could put him in touch with a priest. He did so, and as a first step, the priest gave him a catechism. His wife related that he read the whole of it through before he went to bed that night. According as he got some instruction he used to assemble the children and tell them about it. Then he would say:

"Go off now and talk about it among yourselves, and then tell me what you think."

All were eventually received into the Church, Mr. Weiker and the five eldest children being baptized conditionally because they had been previously baptized in a Presbyterian Church. The six younger children had not been baptized before. On the next day the father and mother and the seven eldest children together received their first Holy Communion.

Voice of Fatima

Our Humblest Hour

The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story and writes another; and his humblest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with what he vowed to make it.

The Way

Problems of Professional People

Are Doctors Bound By Professional Secrecy?

One of the most serious obligations of one engaged in the profession of medicine or surgery is the observance of professional secrecy. This means that the doctor is strictly forbidden to divulge what he has learned about his patients through his professional services to any person not authorized to have such information. For example, if a man came to a doctor for the treatment of a social disease and frankly admitted that he had contracted it through sinful conduct, the doctor is bound under pain of mortal sin not to reveal to any unauthorized person the nature of the patient's ailment and the way in which he was infected. It is to be noted that this obligation forbids the doctor to speak of these matters to any *unauthorized* person. At times, for the proper treatment of the patient, the doctor must give information about the case to a nurse or to a fellow-doctor whom he must consult. But these persons, like the doctor himself, are bound strictly by the code of secrecy.

Professional secrecy must be observed, not only for the benefit of the patient but also for the benefit of society. The trust and confidence that the doctor receives from his fellow-men would be destroyed if he were careless in speaking about the private affairs of his patients. In that event people would fear to approach him in their bodily needs, and the result would be that some who would greatly require a doctor's care would deprive themselves of the necessary attention.

There can be exceptions to the rule of secrecy. Certainly the doctor may tell the parents of a sick child all that he knows about the little one's ailment, since they are authorized by God's law to represent the child and to make decisions in his name. Similarly, if an adult patient is mentally deficient and the doctor wishes a decision as to whether or not he should use a particular remedy, such as a difficult operation, he may give the next of kin a full report. If a person is dying and refuses to make his peace with God, the doctor may inform the members of the family of his condition, in the hope that they will persuade him to prepare for eternity. Indeed, when the hour of death is approaching, both the sick person and the immediate relatives should be warned of the fact.

Moreover, if a patient has a contagious disease and will not consent to be segregated, the doctor, for the sake of the common good, may inform the public authorities. Again, if a gangster asks a doctor to treat wounds that he received in the commission of a crime, the doctor may summon the police. A problem on which theologians are not agreed concerns a patient afflicted with a contagious disease, preparing to marry but determined not to tell his intended bride of his condition. May the doctor warn the girl? The more common opinion is that he may inform her, in order to protect her from the tragedy of entering a marriage in which her health and happiness would be gravely endangered.

The doctor must remember that professional secrecy binds him even when he is in the company of his fellow-doctors, unless he has sufficient reason to consult them for the benefit of the patient; and in that event, he should not mention the patient's name.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D.,
Catholic University of America.



Sideglances

By the Bystander

We have just read the book "*How to Live 365 Days a Year.*" It is one of an avalanche of books that have been appearing in the past few years on the theme of how human beings can find happiness. We feel constrained to comment on it, as a sample of its class, just at the Christmas season, when we commemorate the coming of One Who was more than a doctor or psychologist or philosopher and Who offered "peace on earth to men of good will." "*How to Live 365 Days a Year*" was written by a Doctor John A. Schindler of the Monroe Clinic of Monroe, Wisconsin. Not once in its 222 pages is the name of Christ ever mentioned. Two or three paragraphs in the book touch on the subject of "religion" as related to the art of being happy, but only to relegate it to a negligible and unnecessary place in the program suggested. And none of the fundamental and universal truths that Christ came to teach human beings about themselves is given even a glance. The style of the book is pretty much that of the old-time County Fair patent medicine hawker, filled with superlatives, repetitions, homely tales and rather heavy handed dabs at humor. But the chief fault of the book is its roaring promise of happiness to all, through a simple formula discovered by Dr. Schindler, that has nothing to do with the spiritual nature or destiny or responsibilities of human beings.

As in all such books, there is an important point of truth in Dr. Schindler's presentation. It is a point that has indeed been overlooked in a great deal of medical practice. It is the fact that many human illnesses and physical upsets are simply due to undisciplined human emotions and feelings. Knowledge of this fact is not quite so new

as Dr. Schindler makes it out to be. Reams have been written in the past twenty-five years on psychosomatic diseases, i.e., physical symptoms of disease that result from mental and emotional states. But rarely has the remedy for such diseases been more grossly oversimplified than in "*How to Live 365 Days a Year.*" Not only that, but the attainment of happiness on the part of any human being is wrapped up in a neat little formula that is made to sound ridiculously easy to put into practice. All that a person has to do to live happily is to substitute emotions of equanimity, courage, resignation, determination, cheerfulness and pleasantness for the disease-causing emotions of fear, apprehension, remorse, disappointment, anxiety and frustration. And he can do that, according to Dr. Schindler, without any mental reference to God, eternity, virtue, vice, heaven or hell. He even states that religion does not provide its members or its clergy with the kind of emotions that save them from emotionally induced illnesses. The secret, in a nutshell, is to train yourself to think of the world as wonderful, wonderful, wonderful, and to let nothing interfere with that outlook on the world.

Books like this one, some of them written by ministers of religion as well as by amateur psychologists and the Pollyanna school of physicians, seem to flourish especially during periods of great material prosperity such as that through which Americans are now passing. In such periods health, both mental and physical (but not spiritual), becomes a matter of terrific concern to people. There are so many things to be enjoyed in the world, there is so much money at hand with which to buy them, that the only tragedy seems to be that of

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not being well enough to enjoy all these things. So, anybody who comes up with a new formula for health, for staving off and curing illness, gets an attentive hearing and a sackfull of money for his pains. It was in a former period of prosperity that the famous practical psychologist Coue came to America and had everybody listening to his formula for happiness. His was just about the same as Dr. Schindler's. He taught people with troubles of mind or body to say over and over each day: "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better." And no doubt, even as Dr. Schindler today with his "wonderful, wonderful world," he did help some people out of their doldrums. But what a terribly incomplete, and therefore false view of life these Pollyanna psychologists plant in peoples' minds!

This becomes especially clear at the season of Christmas, when we celebrate the birthday of Him Who gave the only right view of the world and of man to all the children of men. Consider just three truths that Christ came to teach mankind, in juxtaposition to the principles laid down by the Pollyanna psychologists. Christ came to teach man that he is an immortal being, that his soul is spiritual and incorruptible, that everything he does in this world has a bearing on his status for all eternity. Dr. Schindler writes as if there were no immortality for man, no relationship between his actions in this life and in the next, no need of spiritual or moral concepts in the working out of his happiness. He needs only the right emotional outlook on this present world, which is a wonderful world. Christ taught, on the contrary, that there is nothing in this present world worth possessing at the risk or the cost of one's soul. He taught that everything in this world, even father, mother, home, lands, possessions, life itself, should be given up rather than one's soul. Experience proves what everybody who believes in Christ accepts on faith: that the only peace to be found by man on earth

is to be found in subordinating this world to the next; not in trying to make a paradise out of this world.

Again, the Son of God became man because the human race was a fallen race, because every individual human being (except His mother) had inherited the sorrows and conflicts resulting from the sins of his first parents. He became man not necessarily to prove this, because it is obvious, but to offer a remedy for it, to be Himself the Redeemer of fallen man, and at the same time to elevate and transform him into a new likeness of God. Dr. Schindler, on the contrary, has closed his eyes to the universal evidence for the inherited taint in the nature of man. Man's unhappiness is due solely to his own foolish and unnecessary surrender to the wrong kind of emotions; there is no deeper cause of conflict within him that needs to be cured. How infinitely more realistic and satisfactory is the explanation of man's plight given by Christ and put into these words by St. Paul: "I am delighted with the law of God . . . but I feel another law in my members, fighting with the law of God." No human being can escape this warfare between his delight in the law of God and the tendencies of his lower nature toward evil. No amount of cheerful and pleasant and calm thinking and feeling will put an end to the conflict. The end of it will come only as it came to St. Paul: "Who is to set me free from a nature thus doomed to death? Nothing less than the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord."

We repeat, then, the two important points that should strike all who pick up any of these naturalistic, unrealistic modern formulas for happiness. First, they may help, in a small way, some individuals who are making a mess out of their lives and ruining their health by letting their emotions run riot, to calm down, to take things in

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stride, to replace angry and moody and fearful attitudes with peaceful and cheerful ones. They cannot help a person face the reality of cancer, the frustration of old age, the imminent approach of death, with equanimity; only the recognition of other than material and temporal values can help in the major crises of every human life. Second, these "be calm, be cheerful" formulas for happiness completely ignore these facts: Man is a spiritual being, and he needs to live on earth with one eye on eternity, where he will be happy or miserable forever. Man is fallen, and therefore subject to conflict and temptation from within, and to sorrow and misfortune from without, and to death at the end; he needs a Redeemer

to turn his sorrows into joy, his battles into victories. Man has a Redeemer in Jesus Christ, Who came into the world to suffer for him, and then to turn his sufferings into the purchase price of an everlasting heaven. Man needs, above all other things for his happiness, to accept Jesus Christ as His Redeemer, to obey His commands, to imitate His virtues, to suffer for Him when necessary, and to live and die in the hope of real happiness in heaven. Only those who accept his God-given formula will find peace on earth; only they will have the motives and the strength to keep their emotions subject to reason and faith, and their whole being in tranquil subordination to God.

Heresy Corrected

Johnny, age four and a half, and Mary Sue, age two and a half, were visiting baby Jesus in the Christmas crib. They gazed admiringly for some moments, then Mary Sue whispered with a happy sigh:

"Isn't God cute sometimes?"

"Mary Sue," Johnny retorted severely, "God's cute all the time."

Merry Christmas

To an Infrequent Communicant

With all the world your heart today
Will thrill with grateful joy
Because this day your Saviour comes,
A new-born baby boy.

What of the other days that pass
And never one without
The coming of this self-same Child
The world's so glad about?

Each day ten thousand altars turn
Into His birthplace new;
Each day ten thousand priests will stand
And offer Him to you.

Do you rejoice this Christmas and
Oft other days belie
The reasons for your joy because
You coldly pass Him by?

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Catholic Anecdotes

The Center of Interest

It is said that the masterpiece of Da Vinci, known to us as "The Last Supper," is not quite as he painted it originally. He intended that the figure of Christ should dominate the picture. The expression on the face of each of the disciples and their individual attitudes were planned with this effect in mind.

However, when he painted the chalice, after meditating on the fact that it was to represent all the chalices in the world, in which the Precious Blood would be offered for mankind to the end of time, he painted such a beautiful one that it seemed to be real.

On the completion of the picture, Da Vinci invited a friend to inspect it. After studying the painting for a long time in silence, the friend said, with great admiration:

"That chalice is wonderful; it stands out like solid silver." Instantly the artist drew his brush across the goblet and exclaimed:

"Nothing should draw the eyes of the beholder from the Lord."

Masses for Misses

Some of us have relatives and friends who have lapsed from the Church, states *the Sentinel*. We pray for years and nothing seems to happen. Why not follow the example of a man who had two brothers, both "lapsed." He knew that the answer to all prayer is in the Mass, and he was determined to do all in his power to get them back. Knowing approximately the last time that each of them went to Sunday Mass, he calculated the number of

Sundays and holydays of obligation they had missed. It was an appalling figure in both cases. Then, on the ransom principle, he took upon himself the debt they owed to God.

As often as he could reasonably manage, he went to mid-week Masses in reparation for their defaults. Usually he went twice a week, but sometimes three or four times. On holidays he went every day. For his own use he kept a little secret diary, which he headed "Masses for Misses." Gradually he worked off the deficit, and when he had reached the figure debited against the lesser of the defaulters, what the ransom considered a near-miracle happened. That brother came back into the fold. He was brought into the scheme and there were now two ransomers working for their brother, and when his debit figure was reached, back he came to his duties. They had all found a new wonder in the Mass.

Blessing For a Cardinal

When the huge reception was being planned in Montreal for Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger on his return from Rome after he had been invested by Pope Pius as a member of the Sacred College, his mother, Mrs. Leger said:

"The first thing Monseigneur will do on his return will be to get down on his knees and ask Papa for the New Year's blessing—an old custom that he keeps to this day. Last New Year's he spied us in the congregation at old Notre Dame. Right after Mass, still vested as Archbishop of Montreal, he came to us, begged his father for the traditional blessing and knelt before us."



Pointed Paragraphs

Advent

When a great feature or festival is held in the country, long hours, days and even weeks go into preparation. Thus it is for the Mardi Gras celebration held each year in New Orleans just before Ash Wednesday. Thus it is with the Miss America contests, with the world champion boxing matches, with the election and inauguration of a new president.

On the day of the great event everything seems to go off so smoothly. Everything is so beautiful. And everybody is so happy. Hardly anybody in attendance adverts to the fact that only long and immense labor, planning and even suffering made the day possible.

As it is in human affairs, so also is it in spiritual affairs. Christmas is a spiritual affair. Christmas is the birthday of Our Lord. There is no greater day in all history. Neither will there be until the end of the world.

It is only right, then, that there should be preparation for Christmas. If the world series is prepared for with meticulous care, surely Christmas should be prepared for with the same meticulous care. The Church understands this. And so she has set up Advent as the time of preparation for the coming of Our Lord.

Advent is something like Lent, although it is shorter in duration and not quite so rigorous. It lasts only four weeks and does not bind the conscience as tightly as the rules of Lent bind the conscience. Still, purple vestments are used more frequently at Mass than they are at other times of the year (except

Lent, of course); people are told to do a little extra fasting and a little more praying, and it is strongly advised that as many as possible of the faithful receive Holy Communion daily from the time Advent begins until Christmas midnight Mass.

It is a strange contradiction for a Catholic to move heaven and earth to get a ticket for a Notre Dame football game, and then to go to all the trouble of riding a crowded train, of being pushed and butted and batted around in an effort to get into the stadium, of doing all the other things required for seeing the game, but when the great feast of Christmas approaches, to do absolutely nothing by way of preparation.

Advent is a holy and helpful time. Catholics should not forget it. Their manner of observing Advent is the measure of their faith. Perhaps it will also be the measure of their reward.

No Killing on Christmas

It has been pointed out previously in these columns that, according to Catholic teaching, there is a definite moral duty involved in driving safely. This fact, we believe, cannot be controverted. Careless driving risks people's lives needlessly, and the fifth commandment of God directly prohibits doing something by which deliberate injury might be inflicted on one's neighbor.

It is indeed sad to contemplate that over the holiday and holy feast of Christmas there will doubtless be the usual holocaust on the highways, much of it due to this same carelessness and

reckless driving. Surely at this season of the year more than any other there should be exemplified the charity and courtesy and consideration which safe driving requires.

Recently the National Safety Council listed six tips for safe holiday driving:

1. Respect the weather. Adjust your speed to road and weather conditions.
2. Keep windshield clear, and use tire chains for severe snow and ice conditions.
3. Brake intermittently—don't lock the wheels—when the road surface is slippery.
4. Follow other vehicles at a safe distance.
5. Allow plenty of time to make your trip without hurrying.
6. Above all, don't drive after drinking.

We recommend to all our readers who are also automobile drivers that they make a little meditation of sorts on these safety tips. If they are observed, certainly it will make for less tragedy and more happiness on a day when joy in Christ should be paramount.

If they are observed, it will mean not laying oneself open to the self-reproach that through one's carelessness a fellow-human creature has been injured or killed.

A Jew on the Immaculate Conception

Following are the words of the famous Rabbi Paul Drach, who became a Catholic in 1823 in France. As a Rabbi, he had the high degree of Haber, and of Doctor of the Law; and he had received as many as six diplomas from the ranking Rabbis of his time. As a Catholic and as a Jew, Drach had the degrees of Ph.D. and

L.L.B. He was a member of the Legion of Honor; of St. Gregory the Great, and of St. Sylvestre; and was constituted by Pope Gregory the XVI as Honorary Librarian of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda. His two-volume work, in French, *Agreement Between the Synagogue and the Church*, was published in Rome, by order of the Holy Father himself, and bears his signature of approval. These are his beautiful words about Mary:

"Eve, while still a virgin, plucked the fruit of death from the tree; and then, through her husband (Adam) passed on the principle of death to all who should come after her.

"Another Eve was to come, one also a virgin, who would draw from her own body the 'salvation (Messiah, Saviour) of mankind.' She would let men fasten Him to the tree of the cross so that her adoptive children might, this time, eat the fruit of the tree of Life.

"A woman introduced sin into the world; and as a consequence, women thereafter were to suffer a double curse: banishment from the earthly paradise, and continual humiliation in the order of society. However, in 'the fullness of time,' after the new Eve had given birth to the 'Lamb without spot, Who would take away the sins of the world,' woman would be reunited to the communion of saints, and recover all her rights as the companion of man. The Gospel, making man and woman equal, would no longer recognize humiliating divisions. 'No longer is there Jew or Greek; no longer is there slave or freeman; no longer is there male or female,' (that is, — no longer is woman degraded below man, as it was before Christ). 'You are all one in the Anointed Messiah (Jesus Christ); and since you are the Messiah's, you are, (therefore) the off-

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spring of Abraham, heirs according to the promise." (Part of St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, Ch. 3.)

"When I ponder the words which God addressed to the treacherous serpent: '*The Seed of the Woman shall crush your head*' I behold the august Virgin Mary in all her glory: the daughter of the princes of the tribe of Juda, of the royal race of David and Solomon. I vision her clothed in the splendor of the noon-day sun; or standing on the moon with a crown of scintillating stars glorifying her head.

"Never for a single moment had she been under the control of the devil; for she had been exempted from the stain of original sin when she was conceived. Daughter of the Father; Mother of the Son; and Spouse of the Holy Spirit — what could possibly be lacking to the glory of this Virgin who is 'More blessed than all women?'

"Between the Lord and our iniquities, Mary placed the *only* pure Victim, Emmanuel (God-with-us). And He, in order to be able to sustain and carry our iniquities and sorrows, united Himself to our human nature in her immaculate womb. In her, by a most unique privilege bestowed by God, the two most noble qualities of woman were joined into one, namely virginity and motherhood."

Code For TV

A recent article by Larry Wolters in the TV guide of the Chicago *Tribune* points up an interesting and provocative situation. Mr. Wolters entitles his piece: "Whatever happened to the TV code?" The gist of his remarks is that the television industry had better set its house in order by genuine and sincere self-censorship, or else (as in the case of the movies) a species of censorship will inevitably be imposed from the outside.

We are glad to see the point made by a columnist in one of the secular dailies. When Catholics or other religious groups indulge in criticism of this kind, all too readily the charge is made of prudery and puritanical bias. Mr. Wolters is a prominent reporter in his field, and so far as we know can be accused of neither. Yet he presents a cogent case for his contention, complete with illustrations.

Some years ago, he notes, the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters promulgated a Code written by themselves and for themselves. This came as the result of much public indignation over the extreme emphasis in TV on vulgarity, violence and sex. The Code contained salutary rules, and for a while at least the plunging necklines ceased plunging, the vulgarity lessened, and the horror shows began to exercise a modicum of restraint.

Now, according to Mr. Wolters, the hue and cry of public indignation is on again, and with good reason. The Code seems to have been flung in the ash can. Mr. Wolters quotes several recent and specific examples on TV of strip tease dancing and love scenes of such extreme realism and ardor as to be scarcely fit for family viewing up and down the country.

We think the average TV viewer will be inclined to agree with Mr. Wolters that something should be done, and quick. Certainly it is preferable that the industry regulate itself, but it had better get on the ball, and show signs of being willing to do so. Viewers meanwhile can help the industry make up its mind by bringing to bear upon it the weight of public opinion. If your local TV station displays programs which are definitely out of order and in bad taste (the rules of common sense must of course be followed), why

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not drop a postcard to the station and let your reaction be known. Make no mistake about it, radio and television are intensely sensitive to audience reaction. Protests, prudently yet courageously made, will cause a tremor which will be felt all the way to the front office where the advertising people congregate, and where the patterns of TV programs are set.

Apostolate through Books

There are two things that private individuals can do with the books they accumulate over the years. One is to read them and then hoard them, stocking them nicely on ever broadening shelves, but never looking at more than the titles of them again. The other is to read them and then give them away to libraries to which many people have access, so they will be used over and over again.

A steel-worker in Clairton, Pennsylvania, has made an apostolate out of the latter practice. His name is Joe Kotcka. When he was a boy he dreamed of going to Notre Dame, but the financial needs of his family, after the death of his father, denied him the fulfillment of his dream. He went to work in the steel mills.

However, his desire for a higher education made a great reader out of him. He bought every worthwhile book

he could afford and read it. By the time he was twenty he had an excellent library of his own.

Then the thought came to him: "Why should I keep all these books, when others could get so much use out of them?" He thought of Notre Dame University and its many students of foreign extraction like himself, and decided to give his books to that institution.

Since then he has continued gathering and giving away good books to libraries, until now, at the age of forty-five, he has given 11,000 books to Notre Dame and 3,000 to other Catholic institutions. He has found a wonderful way of spreading truth and helping to educate others.

There are many individuals who have fine collections of books, most of which they themselves will never read again, and which will rarely be seen by anybody else. Often such libraries find their way to the musty shelves of second-hand stores after the death of the owner, to be lost to sight for years.

Maybe Joe Kotcka has an idea that many book-owners might consider. Why let good books go to waste, merely out of pride of ownership? Why not give them to libraries where they will be used?

Merry Christmas

To One in Sin at Christmas

Your face may bear a joyous festive smile,
To all your lips cry, "Merry Christmas," while
Within your heart the demon born of sin
Stands barrier to the Christchild's entering in.

I have a wish for you, my friend; 'tis this,
That you may learn to share the Christmas bliss
By grieving o'er your sin's indulgencing
Whereby you said: "Let's crucify this King."

D. F. M.



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EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

Selected and Edited by John P. Schaefer

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

Chap. X—'CHARITY BEARS WITH ALL THINGS' (Cont.)

IN POVERTY AND CONTEMPT

Our patience is certainly very much tested when we are in need of temporal goods. St. Augustine said: "He who has not God, has nothing; he who has God, has all." He who possesses God, and remains united to His blessed will, finds every good. Behold St. Francis, for instance. Though he went barefooted, was clad but in sackcloth, and was deprived of all things, yet he was happier than all the monarchs of the world in simply repeating: "My God and my all."

Properly speaking, a poor man is one who has not what he desires. But he who desires nothing, and is content in his poverty is, in fact, very rich. St. Paul describes such men as "having nothing, yet possessing all things." The true lovers of God have nothing, and yet have everything. For when temporal goods fail them, they exclaim: "My Jesus, You alone are sufficient for me." And with this they rest content. The saints even went a step further. They not only maintained patience in poverty, but sought to be deprived of all that they might live detached from everything and united to God alone.

If we have not the courage, or are not able, to renounce all earthly goods, at all events let us be content with the state of life in which God has placed us. Let our solicitude be not for earthly goods, but for those of heaven, which are immeasurably greater, and

last forever. And let us be fully convinced of what St. Teresa says: "The less we have here, the more we shall have there."

St. Bonaventure said that temporal goods are nothing more than a sort of bird-lime, which hinder the soul from flying to God. And St. John Climacus added that poverty, on the contrary, is a path which leads to God free of all hindrances. These saints were but paraphrasing the words of Our Lord Himself: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In the other beatitudes, the heaven of the life to come is promised to the meek and to the clean of heart. But to the poor, heaven is promised even in this life: "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Yes, for even in the present life the poor enjoy a foretaste of paradise.

By the poor in spirit are meant those who are not merely deprived of earthly goods, but who do not so much as desire them. Having enough to clothe and feed them, they live content, according to the advice of the Apostle: "But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." Poverty is, indeed, blessed, exclaimed St. Laurence Justinian. For she possesses nothing and fears nothing; she is ever joyous and ever in abundance, turning every inconvenience into advantage for the soul. St.

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Bernard said: "The avaricious man hungers after earthly things as a beggar; the poor man despises them as a lord." The miser is always as hungry as a beggar, for he is never satisfied with the possessions he desires. But the poor man despises them all as a rich lord, for he desires nothing.

Our Lord one day said to Blessed Angela of Foligno: "If poverty were not of great excellence, I would not have chosen it for Myself, nor would I have bequeathed it to My elect." Seeing Jesus so poor, the saints did, in fact, have a great affection for poverty. St. Paul says that the desire of growing rich is a snare of Satan, whereby he has wrought the ruin of innumerable souls: "They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition."

For the sake of vile creatures of earth, such unhappy creatures forfeit an infinite Good! St. Basil the martyr, when the emperor, Licinius, offered to make him the chief among his priests if he would renounce Jesus Christ, was quite right in replying: "Tell the emperor that were he to give me his whole kingdom, he would not give me as much as he would rob me of, by depriving me of God."

Let us, then, be content with God, and with those things which He gives us, rejoicing in our poverty when we stand in need of something we desire, and have it not. For in this is our merit. "Not poverty," says St. Bernard, "but the love of poverty, is reckoned a virtue." Many are poor, but from not loving poverty they merit nothing. Therefore does St. Bernard say that the virtue of poverty consists not in being poor, but in the love of poverty.

The bereavement of relatives and friends by death, in a certain sense, also belongs to holy poverty. In this especially we must practice patience. At the loss of a parent or friend some people can find no rest. They shut themselves up in their homes to weep. And in giving free vent to their sorrow they become insupportable to all around them by their want of patience. For whose gratification, I ask these persons, do they thus lament and shed tears? For that of God? Certainly not. For God's will is that they should be resigned to His dispensations. For that of the departed soul? By no means. If the soul be lost, she abhors both you and your tears. If she be saved, and already in heaven, she would have you thank God on her behalf. If still in purgatory, she craves the help of your prayers, and wishes you to bow with resignation to the divine will, and to become a saint, that she may one day enjoy your society in paradise.

Of what use, then, is all this weeping? The Venerable Father Joseph Caracciolo was surrounded, on one occasion, by his relatives, who were bitterly lamenting the death of his brother. "Come, come," he exclaimed, "let us keep these tears for a better purpose—to weep over the death of Jesus Christ, Who has been to us a father, a brother, and spouse, and Who died for love of us." On such occasions we must imitate Job, who, on hearing the news of the death of his sons, exclaimed, fully resigned to the divine will: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. As it has pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

We must also practice patience, and reveal our love of God, by calmly submitting to contempt. For as soon as a soul delivers herself to God, He

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allows her to become the victim of insults and persecution.

Affronts and injuries were the delicacies for which the saints earnestly longed and sought. For thirty years St. Philip Neri had to put up with much ill-treatment in the house of St. Jerome at Rome. But for this very reason he refused to leave it, and turned down all the invitations of his sons to come and live with them in the new Oratory, which he himself had founded, until he had received an express command of the Pope to do so. In such a manner also did St. John of the Cross act. When his physicians recommended a change of air for an illness which eventually carried him to his grave, the Saint could have chosen to retire to a convent, the prior of which was especially attached to him. But, instead, he chose a convent whose prior was his enemy, and who, in fact, almost to his dying day spoke ill of him and abused him in many ways, even forbidding the other monks to visit him. Here we see how the saints even sought to be despised.

St. Teresa wrote this admirable maxim: "Whoever aspires to perfection must beware of ever saying: 'They had no reason to treat me so. If you will not bear any cross but one which is founded on reason, then perfection is not for you.'" While complaining in prison of being unjustly confined, St. Peter Martyr received this celebrated answer from the crucifix, Our Lord saying to him: "And what evil have I done, that I suffer and die on this cross for men?"

Affronts, poverty, torments and all tribulations serve only to estrange further from God the soul that does not love Him. But when they befall a soul in love with God, they become instruments of closer union and more

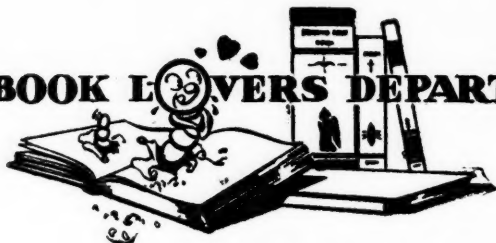
ardent love of God. However great and grievous troubles may be, they only serve to enkindle the flames of charity even more in a soul that loves nothing else but God.

But why, we might complain, does God load us with so many crosses and take pleasure in seeing us afflicted, reviled, persecuted and ill-treated by the world? Is He a tyrant whose cruel disposition makes Him rejoice in our suffering? No. God is by no means a tyrant, nor is He cruel. He is all compassion and love toward us. Suffice it to say that He has died for us. As a matter of fact, He does rejoice at our sufferings, but for our good. For by suffering here we are released hereafter from the debt of torments justly due from us to His divine justice. He rejoices in them because they detach us from the sensual pleasures of this world. He rejoices in them because we give Him, by our patience and resignation in bearing them, a token of our love. He rejoices in them, in fine, because they contribute to the increase of our glory in heaven.

That we may be able to practice patience to advantage in all our tribulations, we must be fully persuaded that every trial comes from the hands of God, either directly, or indirectly through men. We must, therefore, render God thanks when we are beset with sorrows, and accept with gladness every event, prosperous or adverse, that proceeds from Him, knowing that all happens by His disposition for our welfare: "To them that love God all things work together unto good."

In addition to this, it is well, in the midst of our tribulations, to remind ourselves of hell, which we have formerly deserved. For, assuredly, all the pains of this life are incomparably smaller than the awful pains of hell.

BOOK LOVERS DEPARTMENT



Conducted by Thomas Tobin

CATHOLIC AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Dorothy Dohen, 1923 —

Lay Leader

I. Life:

Dorothy Dohen, the third of five children of William and Elizabeth Gutacher Dohen, was born in New York City on April 15th, 1923. Her early education was received at the parish elementary and high school of St. Barnabas. A full scholarship at the College of Mt. St. Vincent-on-the-Hudson enabled her to receive her A.B. degree in 1945. Her college record won for her membership in Kappa Gamma Pi, the National Catholic honor society. It was at college that Miss Dohen became interested in the work of the cells in Catholic Action. She had a period of brief training at the Grail and is interested in the Young Christian Worker Movement begun by Cardinal Cardijn. Her life is dedicated to the Catholic lay movement by the spoken and written word. She summarizes her ideals in this sentence: "The fact that the Popes have called upon lay Catholics to restore all phases of our temporal order to Christ, and the realization that God calls lay people as well as religious to sanctity, have been the molding influences of my life and writing."

II. Writings:

Most of Dorothy Dohen's writing has been associated with *Integrity*, the Catholic

magazine edited by militant lay Catholics who are dedicated to bringing the people back to Christ. Since 1948 Miss Dohen has written regularly for *Integrity*. Some of her work appeared in a monthly feature, "Letters to Margaret" and under her pen name, Elizabeth Williams. Several of her articles have also appeared in *Torch* and *Cross and Crown*. She tells us: "If God wills it, I should like to continue writing to awaken lay people to their call to be apostles and saints."

III. Book:

So far Dorothy Dohen's only book is *Vocation to Love*, which was published in 1950. This book is an excellent expression of the author's intense concern with the religious life of the lay Catholic. The thesis developed is that every person has a primary vocation to love God and his fellowmen. This basic proposition is thoroughly explained and developed in the clear writing from the pen of this dedicated apostle. Although the book has an important message for everyone, religious, single, married, it does have a special appeal to a single person who has developed the personal philosophy of love of Christ or who needs a rounded explanation of the meaning of life.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

I. Religious Books:

Catholic Liturgy. By Gaspar Lefebvre,
O.S.B. \$3.50.
Summary of the liturgy by a master.

Our Lady Speaks. By Pere Leon Bonnet.
\$3.00.
Solid devotional reflections on the
Litany of Loretto.

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Stop, Look and Live. By Rev. James Keller. \$.65.

Daily spiritual tonic.

A New Testament Commentary. By Ronald A. Knox. \$.75.

Excellent explanation of the New Testament.

Way To Happiness. By Fulton J. Sheen. \$2.00.

Philosophy of life.

Retreat for Lay People. By Ronald A. Knox. \$3.00.

Refreshing reflections by Monsignor Knox.

The Way of the Cross. By Caryll House-lander. \$2.75.

Way of the Cross in modern life.

Tenders of the Flock. By Leo Trese. \$2.50.

Practical meditations for the priest.

Marriage. A Medical and Sacramental Study. By Alan Keenan, O.F.M. and John Ryan, M.D., F.R.C.S. \$4.50.

Scientific study of marriage by a priest and a doctor.

God, A Woman and The Way. By Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O. \$3.50.

Excellent presentation of the sorrows of Mary by the talented Trappist.

II. Biography:

These Came Home. By Gilbert L. Oddo. \$3.00.

Stories of conversion by fifteen people.

Never Alone. By Joan Roberts. \$3.00.

Autobiography of the star of Oklahoma.

Born Catholics. By F. J. Sheed. \$3.50.

Nineteen cradle Catholics tell their stories.

Story of Thomas More. By John Farrow. \$3.50.

New life of the famous layman.

Storm of Glory. By John Beevers. \$.65.

Life of Little Flower.

Saint Catherine of Siena. By Sigrid Und-

set. \$3.50.

Life of the remarkable woman saint by the distinguished Sigrid Undset.

Schoolteacher and Saint. By Pascal Par-ente. \$3.00.

Foundress of a Community and leader in Catholic Action.

The Manner is Ordinary. By John La Farge, S.J. \$4.75.

Autobiography of the noted Jesuit Interracial leader.

I'll Cry Tomorrow. By Lillian Roth. \$3.95.

The ex-alcoholic who became a con-vert.

The Glory of Christ. By Mark L. Kent, M.M., and Sister Mary Just. \$3.75.

Brief biographies of 200 famous mis-sionaries.

III. Novels, Essays, Poetry:

Under My Hat. By Joseph A. Breig. \$2.50.

Informal essays on serious topics.

Joyce Kilmer's Anthology of Catholic Poets. By James Tobin. \$.85.

The classic anthology brought up to date.

Lady for Ransom. By Alfred Leo Dug-gan. \$3.50.

Historical novel of the Crusades.

Dark Enemy. By Edward J. Edwards. \$3.00.

A novel of a young doctor and his problems.

Don Camillo's Dilemma. By Giovanni Guareschi. \$3.00.

More tales of the amusing battles be-tween the parish priest and the Com-munist mayor in an Italian town.

School For Hope. By Michael Mc-Lav-erty. \$3.50.

Novel about a young Irish teacher.

Love is Eternal. By Irving Stone. \$3.95.

Novel of the love of Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln.

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Glance at the back cover of this issue and DO IT NOW.



Lucid Intervals

A manufacturer was all business — no time for parties and such things. But finally, after his wife's constant pleas for a night out together, he relented and took his wife out for a show and some night-clubbing. He was amazed at the new dance steps and his eyes were glued on a couple doing the rumba and a samba embellished with gyrations all their own.

"Amazing, simply amazing," he marvelled aloud.

"I'm glad to see something can take your mind off business," his wife declared.

"Quiet," cautioned the husband. "I've just got an idea for a new type of agitator for our line of washing machines."

Salesman (in book dept.): "I'd be glad to help you select a book. Do you want something light?"

Bright Young Thing: "Oh, it really doesn't matter; I have my car outside anyway."

Little Susie had been raised on nursery rhymes and fairy tales. When she visited a farm one day with her parents she was fascinated by three little pigs in their pen.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed, "why are they just lying around like that? Shouldn't they be building straw houses or going to market or something?"

A woman tourist in Florida was admiring an Indian's necklace.

"What are those things?" she asked.

"Alligator teeth, ma'am," replied the Indian.

"Oh, I see. I suppose they have the same value for your people that pearls do for us."

"Not quite," he answered gravely. "Anybody can open an oyster."

When one of her boarders came down with pneumonia, the landlady pushed the nurse sent by the doctor right out of the house.

"I know more about pneumonia than any nurses," she maintained. "Didn't I have three husbands who died of it?"

The club bore tackled the Oldest Member and complained of being insulted.

"I say," he grumbled, "Smithers called me a driveling old mule. What shall I do?"

"Don't ask me," replied the Oldest Member, "I'm not a veterinary surgeon."

A small boy was boasting of the skill he had acquired at summer camp.

"And I suppose you learned to swim like a fish," his uncle remarked.

"Oh, better," the lad replied.

"Better? Is that possible?"

"Sure," he scoffed. "I can swim on my back!"

A district attorney was having trouble with one of the witnesses, a rather pugnacious old man.

"Are you acquainted with any of the jurymen?" asked the district attorney.

"More than half," grunted the witness.

"Are you willing to swear that you know more than half of them?"

The old man flicked a look over the jury box. "If it comes to that," he drawled, "I'm willing to swear I know more than all of them put together."

"Here's a penny, my good man. How did you ever become so destitute?"

"I wuz like you, mum, always giving away vast sums to the poor and needy."

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Amongst Ourselves

The hearts of all the priest-editors of THE LIGUORIAN are filled with wishes and prayers that all their readers, including the many new ones who will receive their first issue as a Christmas gift, will have a truly blessed and fruitful Christmas season. This wish is put into many of the articles published in this December issue, in which we try to show what God did for all of us in becoming man, and what each of us must do to realize in ourselves the eternal benefits He came to bestow.

This Christmas issue of THE LIGUORIAN will be followed in due course by the regular monthly issues, each one dedicated to explaining, clarifying, detailing and exemplifying more of the specific, practical teachings of Christ and of His Church. To new readers, and for the reassurance of old, we reaffirm our policy of accepting no advertising for the pages of THE LIGUORIAN, publishing no begging appeals, asking for nothing but the attention of readers to the presentation and explanation of the truths and convictions offered in THE LIGUORIAN.

Does this mean that we expect never to be disagreed with? By no means. We ask for attention, not for perfect agreement with every stand we take. In some things, of course, we shall be expressing revealed or defined Catholic doctrine, or universal moral laws, or serious commands of the Catholic Church. In these cases the disagreement of a reader would not be merely

with us but with Christ Himself, or, what comes to the same thing, with His Church. Thus, when we state that birth-prevention is never lawful, or that all Catholics are bound, if they can do so, to send their children to Catholic schools, we are not expressing our *opinions* but universally binding moral *precepts*. Our purpose will be to make it easier for all to understand why such laws are universally binding; but no doubt there will be those who will refuse submission to the will of Christ and even write in defense of their rebellion. We publish such letters only in order to make the truth more clear by contrast.

In other matters we shall not be expressing certain and universally binding precepts or principles, but our own opinions and convictions concerning the application of principles to individual cases or current modern problems. In many of these matters there will be room for difference of opinion among our readers. What we ask is that *all readers read the reasons for our opinions in controverted matters and not just cancel their subscription in a huff because we hold an opinion contrary to theirs*. We learn by looking at all sides of questions, not by doggedly refusing to look at any other opinion than our own. THE LIGUORIAN will always try to make it clear when it is presenting truths that must be believed by Catholics, and opinions on which there can be legitimate different points of view.

LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from The Liguorian, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

Your Best Christmas Gifts

The best thing you can give to anyone for Christmas is something that brings that person closer to Christ. For Christ is life, the only real life, an everlasting life of happiness for every human being born into this world.

You are limited in regard to the ways in which you can bring grown people closer to Christ. You cannot pick them up and carry them. You cannot push them or pull them. You can only act on their mind by helping them to know Christ, and on their will by inspiring them to love and serve Him.

The easiest way to assist the minds and wills of those whom you wish to make happy is to give them reading matter about Christ and His will and His promises and His love. *The Liguorian* is such reading matter. Give a year's subscription starting with this Christmas issue to many whom you love. You will bring them closer to Christ.

CHRISTMAS GIFT RATES

One subscription (1 year) \$2.00
Additional subscriptions each \$1.50
Add 25c for each subscription to Canada and foreign countries. Send as many as you wish. Include your own renewal.

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